

The copyright of this thesis rests with the University of Cape Town. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Beyond the Inferno:
Literary Representations of New York City Before and After 9/11

Jared Smith - SMTJAR003

A minor dissertation submitted in *partial fulfilment* of the requirements for the
award of the degree of Master of Arts in English

Faculty of the Humanities
University of Cape Town

[2010]

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Contents

Abstract	page 2
Acknowledgements	page 3
Chapter One: The Functionality of the City	page 5
Chapter Two: The Retrospective Reality of <i>Fury</i>	page 27
Chapter Three: The Art of Falling	page 49
Conclusion: Beyond the Inferno	page 72
References	page 75

Abstract

From its founding, New York City has served as the gateway to the New World and, as such, has been the impetus behind the American Dream. As the city grew in size and importance, though, so the levels of antagonism rose among its inhabitants, for, like any large-scale urban environment, it was filled with what Georg Simmel labels “overwhelming social forces” (1950:410). These forces became even more relevant within the context of what Fredric Jameson calls the “postmodern hyperspace” (1984:83) of urban society which emerged during the latter half of the twentieth century. Thus, by focusing on the real-world example of New York, this dissertation examines how the dialectical negotiation between a postmodern city’s form and its function has a profound impact on the identities of that city’s inhabitants, producing alienating and antagonistic experiences of city life which, in turn, places increasing pressure on both the conception and perception of an individual’s status within the boundaries of that cityscape.

The terrorist attacks that occurred on 11 September 2001 functioned as yet another overwhelming force that greatly affected New York’s inhabitants. The dedicated media coverage of the event effectively burned the image of a ‘wounded’ New York into people minds. This emotional imprinting occurred not only because of the horrifying destruction wrought upon the city, leading to the loss of the spectacle that was the World Trade Centre, but also because of the change that this destruction brought about in the mindset of everyone who watched those buildings fall, leading to the establishment of a ‘before’ and ‘after’ dialectic.

Two literary texts that highlight this dialectic were chosen to provide the basis of this dissertation’s analysis. These are Salman Rushdie’s *Fury* (2001) and Don DeLillo’s *Falling Man* (2007). Written and set in 2000, *Fury* provides an insightful and provocative account of life in New York at the turn of the twenty-first century and, through a retrospective reading of this novel, one can identify its prescience in depicting a New York in which the escalating antagonism, both within and without the city, seems to herald impending disaster. Indeed, that disaster was the 9/11 attacks, which *Falling Man* takes as its subject, providing individualised, albeit

fictional, accounts of the trauma that was experienced by those who were in the towers and their families, as well as those who witnessed it.

By offering an analysis of Rushdie and DeLillo's narrative strategies in these novels, specifically in light of Michel Foucault's theory of the heterotopia, Italo Calvino's conception of the "infernal city" in his *Invisible Cities* (1974), and the work of key 9/11 theorists, such as Jean Baudrillard, Slavoj Žižek and David Simpson, among others, this dissertation will plot the trajectory of the 'before' and 'after' dialectic in order to ascertain how effectively these novels function as (re)presentations of the real-world city of New York.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Associate Professor Lesley Marx, for her insightful and incredibly helpful commentary throughout the writing and editing processes. I would also like to thank Lauriane Woollatt for recommending *Falling Man* to me, and for diligently proofreading the final manuscript.

Lower Manhattan had become an ashen shell of itself, all but a Pompeii under the impact of a terrorist attack involving two airliners that crashed into the World Trade Center and then brought its twin towers down... For all Americans, the unimaginable became real... It was... one of those moments in which history splits, and we define the world as "before" and "after."

(The New York Times, Editorial, 12 September 2001)

University Of Cape Town

Chapter One

- The Functionality of the City -

Like all of Phyllis's inhabitants, you follow zigzag lines from one street to another, you distinguish the patches of sunlight from the patches of shade, a door here, a stairway there, a bench where you can put down your basket, a hole where your foot stumbles if you are not careful. All the rest of the city is invisible. Phyllis is a space in which routes are drawn between points suspended in the void... Your footsteps follow not what is outside the eyes, but what is within, buried, erased.

(Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, 1974)

The city is... a state of mind, a body of customs and traditions... not merely a physical mechanism and an artificial construction. It is involved in the vital processes of the people who compose it; it is a product of nature and particularly of human nature.... [Thus] a great city tends to spread out and lay bare to the public view in a massive manner all the characters and traits which are ordinarily obscured and suppressed in smaller communities. The city, in short, shows the good and evil in human nature in excess.

(Robert E. Park, *The City*, 1925)

The concept of the city and its effect on individual and collective consciousness has been the subject of much academic debate, especially during the twentieth century, where, in a similar fashion to the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there were numerous technological advancements, particularly within the fields of transport and communication, that revolutionised the functionality of the cityscape. These factors caused many cities to grow in size and importance, becoming the metropolises of today by being not only the seat of their respective nation's money economy, but, as Georg Simmel argues, also the locale of economic and social freedoms through their expansive move toward cosmopolitanism (1950:411, 416). Indeed, by the late-nineteenth century, the effects of this urban expansion were already filtering through to national socio-political arenas, becoming points of contention for various theorists, including, among many others, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. In "The city, the division of labor, and the emergence of modern capitalism", Marx and Engels argue that the rise of the urban out of the rural spawned an antagonism between the inhabitants of the two that began "with the transition from barbarism to civilization, from tribe to State, from locality to nation, and runs through the whole history of civilization to the present

day... [because] the town already is... the concentration of the population, of the instruments of production, of capital, of pleasures, of needs, while the country demonstrates just the opposite fact, their isolation and separation” from the perpetual drive of modern progression, whether that be economic, political or technological (1973:139).

Following this trajectory, as Aiden Southall does, it is clear that *all* cities, “from the smallest to the largest, the earliest to the latest, have been the greatest points... of increasing density in their space and time [and have thus] given expression to the best and worst extremes of human potentiality” (1998:4). Southall’s view echoes that of Robert Park, a founder of the Chicago School of social urban theory, who sought to uncover the connection between social behaviour and the urban world, along similar lines to the investigations of Simmel, Marx and Engels in Europe. The second epigraph to this chapter is taken from Park’s seminal work on this subject and highlights the intrinsic connection between human nature and urban space that existed in the post-industrial world. Lewis Mumford (1995:21), one of Park’s contemporaries, went on to expand this notion by postulating that the city is both the form and the symbol of our move towards developing integrated social relationships. Here human experience is transformed into viable signs, patterns of conduct and systems of order, which work together to create a fully differentiated and self-conscious society.

It is this dialectic between a city’s form and function that has defined much of the debate around the impact of this environment on the individual consciousness. Simmel begins his foundational essay, “The metropolis and mental life”, with the statement that “the deepest problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence in the face of overwhelming social forces, of historical heritage, of external culture, and of the technique of life” (1950:409). This argument seems just as applicable, if not more so, today, in light of what Hall, Hubbard & Short (2008) regard as the third urban revolution: the transformation of the metropolis into a ‘world-city’ as a result of the current trend of globalisation.¹ Owing to the exponential growth of cities over the

¹ Hall, Hubbard & Short (2008) propose that the first urban revolution represented the earliest recorded establishment of permanent human settlements, predominantly within the regions of

last century, these “overwhelming forces” have increased their pressure on the contemporary urbanite, and the antagonism that Marx and Engels identified as occurring across the rural–urban divide, is now magnified within the urban environment itself. Here it plays out at the level of the individual, because it is the people within any urban environment, either inhabitant or visitor, and consequently the diversity of their wants and needs in relation to the various spaces they occupy within the cityscape at any particular time, that function simultaneously as the city’s own *raison d’être*, and its most volatile attribute.

This dynamic forms the basis of much of my analysis within this dissertation, for the cityscape functions both as the “context and platform for new forms of identity construction/re-invention/rediscovery... [resulting in] a postmodern city of different ethnic enclaves, consumer niches and taste communities, spun out across a decentered landscape where the boundaries between city and country are often hard to discern” (Hall, Hubbard & Short, 2008:3–4). I have chosen to hone in on one particular urban environment, that world-city which seems, at present, the most decentred: New York City. For it is here, in this symbolic capital of the globalised and hegemonic power of America and the Western World, that we have seen the realisation of Southall’s extremes of human potentiality, and witnessed their catastrophic impact on the world through the terror attacks of 11 September 2001. In fact, these attacks will be the locus around which I frame my argument, for they represent a fundamental shift in how we view the functionality of a large city, not only due to their physical effect on the cityscape of New York, but also through the profound way in which they altered the conceptualisation of city-space. This ‘before’ and ‘after’ dialectic will be made evident through my analyses of two literary texts: Salman Rushdie’s *Fury* (2001) and *Falling Man* by Don DeLillo (2007), which will be the focus of chapters two and three, respectively.

Postmodernity and City Life

For now, though, I wish to contextualise the element of decentredness that is seemingly driving the current world sentiment, particularly within the framework of

Egypt and Mesopotamia. The second urban revolution followed a few thousand years later, as the result of a combination of three primary factors: the Industrial Revolution, the birth of the nation-state, and the spread of capitalism as the dominant world economic policy.

postmodern consumer culture. Perhaps the best place to begin is with Fredric Jameson, who effectively established the link between postmodernism and the urban capitalist world in his key text, "Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism". Here Jameson argues that there is a fundamental flaw in the interaction between people and the cityscape, because the built space of the city has seemingly mutated into a "postmodern hyperspace", which

has finally succeeded in transcending the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external world. It may now be suggested that this alarming disjunction point between the body and its built environment... can itself stand as the symbol and analogon of that even sharper dilemma which is the incapacity of our minds, at least at present, to map the greater global multinational and decentred communicational network in which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects.

(1984:83–84)

According to Jameson, this disjunction stems from a fundamental deficiency in our perceptual abilities "to match this new hyperspace... in part because our perceptual habits were formed in that older kind of space" (80). In this, Jameson is referring to the space afforded to history and memory, the influence of which will become apparent in the following two chapters, particularly through a detailed analysis of each novel's protagonist.

The "spatial confusion" (1984:92), that Jameson recognised within a postmodern city was also a matter of contention for Henri Lefebvre, who, in his phenomenological work *The Production of Space*, differentiates between three closely linked modes of space that function together as social products. Lefebvre labels the first of these "spatial practice", for it "embraces [the] production and reproduction [of] particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation" (1991:33) and thus, through the active utilisation of these locations, in the form of daily routine, for example, these perceived spaces "ensure continuity and some degree of [societal] cohesion" (33). Lefebvre's second mode is "spatial representation", or "conceptualised space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers... all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived" (38). In this sense, spatial representations are logical and rational, for they embody the many signs and codes that constitute spatial conception. For example, we use various representations of

space, whether they be words such as 'house' or 'office', or iconographic symbols such as maps or plans, to conceptualise a particular space at any given time.

In my literary analyses, I will show how a sense of "spatial confusion" can easily ensue when these spatial representations become intangible through the blurring of one's conceptual and perceptual abilities, particularly in relation to the appropriation of Lefebvre's final mode, "representational space". This is, "space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'" (1991:39, original emphasis). Representational spaces are those spaces "which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate [by] overlay[ing] physical space [and] making symbolic use of its objects" (39). Lefebvre insists that the intrinsic connectedness of these three modes, and the various ways in which they are used within the framework of an urban environment, allows "the 'subject', the individual member of a given social group, [to] move from one [type of space] to another without confusion" (40). While the recognition of the relationship between notions of "the perceived", "the conceived", and "the lived" may more effectively redefine the global space that is the postmodern world-city, and subsequently assist us in locating our specific place/s within this environment, I believe that this recognition is not one easily achieved, particularly when faced with Simmel's overwhelming external social forces. The complicating effects of these forces will become apparent in my subsequent chapters, as I analyse how the novels' characters interact, both with one another and the various spaces within the cityscape.

In a similar manner to Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau argues for a tactical redefinition of city space through the realisation of the "Concept-city", which sees the

creation of a *universal* and anonymous *subject* which is the city itself. [With this] it gradually becomes possible to attribute to it... all the functions and predicates that were previously scattered and assigned to many different real subjects – groups, associations or individuals. 'The city', like a proper name... provides a way of conceiving and constructing space on the basis of a finite number of stable, isolatable, and interconnected properties.

(1988:94, original emphasis)

At first, de Certeau's more positive conception may seem at odds with Jameson's notion of a "whole extraordinarily demoralizing and depressing original new global space" (Jameson, 1984:88). However, the two concepts are no more than different

sides to the same coin. Jameson labels this hyperspace as the “moment of truth” of postmodernism, because it is the space in which the recognition of the disconnection between object and subject, that is, between the city and the individual, “has become most explicit [and] moved the closest to the surface of consciousness” (88). Jameson later clarifies this point in an interview with Anders Stephanson, stating that “insofar as postmodernism *really expresses* multinational capitalism, there is some cognitive content to it... If the subject is lost in it, and if in social life the psychic subject has been decentered by late capitalism, [then postmodernism] faithfully and authentically registers that. That is its moment of truth” (Stephanson and Jameson, 1989:14, original emphasis). This loss of the subject within the postmodern hyperspace of the city is reflected within de Certeau’s dialectic by the allocation of subjectivity to the city itself, as it becomes “a place of transformation and appropriations, the object of various kinds of interference but also a subject that is constantly enriched by new attributes” (de Certeau, 1988:95).

Alienation and Antagonism in the Infernal City

In addition to a sense of spatial confusion, Jameson argues that our ability to recognise and fully appreciate the postmodernist moment of truth is also inhibited by a sense of “social confusion” (1984:92), which often stems from the human need to maintain a semblance of privacy in an environment geared toward social interaction. Jean Baudrillard also notes the prevalence of this need within the urban environment. Commenting on life in contemporary New York, Baudrillard remarks that “the number of people here who think alone, sing alone, and eat and talk alone in the streets is mind-boggling. And yet they don't add up. Quite the reverse. They subtract from each other and their resemblance to one another is uncertain” (1994:15). This uncertainty is a response to the tension many urban “inhabitants” and “users” experience when trying to balance the continually shifting and blurring outward appearance of a world-city, the transience of many urban spatial practices and spatial representations, with one’s innate need to inhabit a personalised representational space, and thus, as Simmel claims, “maintain the individuality of [one’s] existence” (1950:409). The New Yorkers Baudrillard mentions have seemingly embraced the strangeness of city life through their voluntary solitariness, and have “adopt[ed] the most tendentious of peculiarities, that is, the specifically

metropolitan extravagances of mannerism, caprice and preciousness” (Simmel, 1950:422). Simmel goes on to argue that “for many character types, ultimately the only means of saving for themselves some modicum of self-esteem and the sense of filling a position is indirect, [and achieved] through the awareness of others” (422). In other words, an individual must either choose to acknowledge the actions of another individual, or ignore them completely. In this way, these New Yorkers have each created a functional representational space for themselves, whereby their solitary actions facilitate the affirmation of their own subjectivities while allowing for the multiplicity of these subjectivities within the context of urban society.

Italo Calvino offers further insight into this social behaviour. In the concluding paragraph of *Invisible Cities*, Marco Polo responds to Kublai Khan’s despondence at the inevitability of what he labels as the pull of the “infernal city” by arguing that

the inferno of the living is not something that will be; if there is one, it is what is already here, the inferno where we live every day, that we form by being together. There are two ways to escape suffering it. The first is easy for many: accept the inferno and become such a part of it that you can no longer see it. The second is risky and demands constant vigilance and apprehension; seek and learn to recognize who and what, in the midst of the inferno, are not inferno, then make them endure, give them space.

(Calvino, 2007:147–148)

I believe that the inferno to which Calvino is referring here is not the infernal city of Dis from Dante Alighieri’s *Inferno* (although Calvino is clearly drawing on Dante’s descriptions),² but, rather, it is the postmodern city itself. Each of the numerous urban conceptions in *Invisible Cities* set out to describe a different city, but, in doing so, also comment on an aspect of the functionality of all cities, such as the relationship between a city’s physical appearance and human memory, as in the first epigraph to this chapter.³ Thus, in order to escape suffering the inferno of the city, via Calvino’s initial method, one first needs to become a functioning part of it, essentially giving one’s self over to the otherness of the city, replacing that otherness with a sense of security and familiarity. This brings us back to Baudrillard’s observation, and the reason why these solitary activities seem to subtract from one

² The city of Dis resides between the fifth and sixth circles of hell and is guarded by Fallen angels and the Furies, who deny Dante and Virgil passage through its gates, until rebuked by one of Heaven’s Angels. See Cantos VIII and IX in Dante’s *Inferno*.

³ I have included four central passages from *Invisible Cities* as epigraphs to each chapter because I believe the connections Calvino establishes between the city and human experience are profoundly relevant to the various conceptions and perceptions of city-space that I investigate in this dissertation.

another. The representational space that each of those New Yorkers inhabits is at once separate and connected, and thus does not add up in any sense. Despite the various activities taking place, all of those activities occur within the same functional framework, as each individual is subscribing to the same social contract. They maintain an appearance of social isolation in order to establish the boundaries between their public and private lives, and thus are rewarded with equal consideration for privacy from others, who themselves are engaged in the same. This level of mutual respect functions as a social contract because it is bolstered by what Slavoj Žižek labels as “tolerant liberal multiculturalism” (2002:11), the dominance of which within late capitalist urban society, leads to “an experience of the Other deprived of its Otherness” (11), an experience that glosses Calvino’s first method of escape. Indeed, Žižek’s *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* (cited above) is one of the central texts around which I construct my argument.⁴

To expand on the dynamics of the social contracts that are present within urban society, Simmel is yet again a useful source to examine, for he establishes that “[m]an is a differentiating creature. His mind is stimulated by the difference between a momentary impression and the one which preceded it, [thus] the rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance, and the unexpectedness of onrushing impressions” takes more effort of consciousness to process (1950:410). For the most part, this is an effort to which many city inhabitants are either unwilling or unable to commit themselves, leading to a sense of indifference that pervades the urban social mindset. Responding to the social contract thus becomes a begrudged task, rather than an unconscious activity, and this sees the emergence of what Simmel labels the “blasé attitude”, which “consists in the blunting of discrimination. This does not mean that... objects are

⁴ This text was commissioned in 2002 by Verso publications, along with two others, Baudrillard’s *The Spirit of Terrorism* and Paul Virilio’s *Ground Zero*, to mark the first anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. These works represented a concerted effort to concretise political and philosophical discussion around the attacks, by shifting its focus away from the plethora of American commentaries that had emerged during that first year, and allowing three of Europe’s leading theorists to evaluate the significance of not only the terrorist act itself, but also of the buildings that were chosen as targets, namely the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. For the purposes of this dissertation, I found that Žižek’s speculations on the nature of the Real, and Baudrillard’s analysis of the symbolism of the WTC towers to be most relevant to my argument, and have thus chosen to focus on these texts in my subsequent chapters.

not perceived, but rather that the meaning and differing values of things, and thereby the things themselves, are experienced as insubstantial” (414). Social indifference affects our use of representational spaces, for, as Fran Tonkiss argues, “it is a response – in the form of a lack of response – to the sensory overkill of the urban environment and the social overload of the urban crowd... which serves to abridge the terms of social contact” (2005:117). Thus the blasé attitude “works against the basic impulse to differentiate and to make sense, it becomes a way of not seeing and not listening in the city” (117). In this way, it is akin to Calvino’s first means of escape, because it functions as a defence mechanism, allowing an individual to escape the overwhelming social pressures that occur within the confines of a cityscape. In contrast to this, I will discuss the complexity of Calvino’s second method of escape in my third chapter, for it is the method that I believe offers the best alternative to deal with the repetitive and overwhelming conditions of contemporary city life and, as such, can be read into the narrative strategies that DeLillo employs in portraying the ways in which *Falling Man*’s characters deal with the aftermath of the World Trade Centre’s (WTC) destruction.

To add another element of functionality to this social behaviour, we can extend the blasé attitude of city dwellers to the character of the *flâneur*, as introduced in the writings of Charles Baudelaire. Expanded on by Walter Benjamin in his studies of Baudelaire and the workings of the Parisian Arcades of the nineteenth century, the *flâneur* has since been used, in sociological theory, as an archetype of the urban inhabitant who indulges in Simmel’s “metropolitan extravagances”. In this regard, the *flâneur* was characterised as a man who “takes the urban scene as a spectacle, strolling through it as if it were a diorama... dehistoriciz[ing] the city, breaking it apart into a shower of events [and] primary sights” (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1993:59–60). Indeed, for Benjamin, this element of dehistoricisation was vital in understanding why *flânerie* was prevalent in urban, and specifically Parisian, society in the nineteenth century. To this end, he argues that in a world that was rapidly changing, “the *flâneur* still stood at the margin, of the great city, as of the bourgeois class. Neither of them had yet overwhelmed him. In neither was he at home. He sought his asylum in the crowd” (Benjamin, 1983:170). The *flâneur* gained some sense of solace from being immersed within the city, again, a part of the crowd

itself, but also separate from it, because, “[t]he *flâneur* is someone abandoned in the crowd” a situation which “permeates him blissfully like a narcotic” (1983:55).

As the urban environment expanded and changed during the twentieth century, though, the character of the *flâneur* lost its significance, for within the decentred hyperspace of the city, *everything* had become dehistoricised, and so what had once been a select experience now seemingly offered little of value. Nevertheless, de Certeau proposes that walking through a city is still an experience that is vital to the relationship that exists between the urban environment and its inhabitants, for “[t]o walk is to lack a place... The moving about that the city multiplies and concentrates makes the city... an immense social experience of lacking a place – an experience that is compensated for by the relationships and intersections of these exoduses that intertwine and create an urban fabric” (1988:103). In this way, de Certeau argues that the texturology of a city begins with footsteps, which, like the activities of Baudrillard’s New Yorkers, “cannot be counted because each unit has a qualitative character: a style of tactile apprehension and kinesthetic appropriation... Their intertwined paths give their shape to spaces. They weave places together” (1988:97). Similarly, David Frisby proposes that, in a contemporary context, the element of walking in the city that is embodied in the term ‘*flânerie*’, “can directly be associated with a form of *looking* [and] observing... people, social types [and] social contexts... a form of *reading the city* and its population... its spatial images, its architecture, [and] its human configurations” (1994:82–83, original emphasis). Taking my lead from both de Certeau and Frisby, I will use this postmodern rendition of *flânerie*, in which everything is a text that can be read, to scaffold my literary analyses by examining the ways in which both Rushdie and DeLillo focus on the act of walking in the city, and what it represents for each of the characters who engage in this spatial practice.

The experiences of “tactile apprehension and kinesthetic appropriation” that de Certeau highlights as being inherent within the interaction between the built environment and its inhabitants are but one aspect of that interaction. In *The Philosophy of Money*, Simmel argues that living within the confines of the urban environment has also led to man “becom[ing] estranged from himself; an insuperable barrier of media, technical inventions, abilities and enjoyments has

been erected between him and his most distinctive and essential being” (2006:484). This sentiment is echoed by Sigmund Freud in *Civilization and its Discontents*, in which Freud argues that, while “[m]ankind is proud of its exploits and has a right to be... men are beginning to perceive that all this newly won power over space and time, this conquest of the forces of nature, this fulfilment of age-old longings, has not made them feel any happier” (1930:46). This sense of estrangement found a number of parallels in Simmel’s later writings, particularly “The metropolis and mental life”, but it is interesting to note that in *The Philosophy of Money*, Simmel draws specific attention to the way in which this estrangement stemmed from an individual’s transformation into a consumer. He explains that

[a]ll individual particular strivings, all the torturous turns along the way and all the specific demands that the acquisition of [an] object imposes upon us... are transferred to the object itself as particular qualities of its nature and its relation to us, and all are invested in this object as its fascination. In the opposite instance, the more the acquisition is carried out in a mechanical and indifferent way, the more the object appears to be colorless and without interest.

(2006:256–257)

Thus, as materialism increasingly became a dominant cultural practice during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, focused specifically on and within cities, the fascination for the material became increasingly unfulfilling, especially for urbanites who were continually surrounded by these objects. This added further strain to any social contracts in place, and the resultant frustration felt by many urban consumers tended to be transferred by them to their interaction with other city inhabitants, escalating the level of antagonism experienced within a city.

In an attempt to explain this process, already in effect to some degree at the time he was writing, Simmel designated this attitude as one which is primarily based on reserve, that is our reluctance to interact with, or more specifically, to trust our neighbour. He argues that “the inner aspect of this outer reserve is not only indifference, but, more often than we are aware, it is a slight aversion, mutual strangeness and repulsion, which will break into hatred and spite at the moment of a closer contact, however caused” (1950:415). Freud also examined the nature of this repulsion at length, and, echoing Simmel, reasoned that “[t]he existence of this tendency to aggression which we can detect in ourselves and rightly presume to be present in others is the factor that disturbs our relations with our neighbours... [to the extent that] civilized society is perpetually menaced with disintegration through

this primary hostility of men toward one another” (1930:86). As cities increased in size and population, so too did the level of hostility, which resulted in many outbreaks of urban violence and protest during the twentieth century, and, indeed, the first decade of the twenty-first. This hostility is apparent throughout Rushdie’s *Fury*, forming a central motivation for much of the novel’s narrative, the consequences of which will become apparent in my analysis in chapter two.

To lessen the effect of this inherent hostility, or in an attempt to avoid it all together, urbanites often seek the company and safety of those fellow inhabitants towards whom their level of antagonism is the least pronounced, and in contemporary cities, this is generally based on a sense of familiarity maintained along national, racial, cultural, sexual or gendered lines. These urban communities, as with the solitary activities I examined earlier, offer a means of escape along similar lines to that which Simmel and Calvino propose, while still functioning within the larger societal structures of the city itself. To this end, it becomes apparent that “[i]f social relations in the city [are] characterized by anonymity and rationality, urban communities [are] throwbacks to other places, older kinds of sociality. They appeared like villages in the city... usually transported by rural incomers or foreign immigrants” (Tonkiss, 2005:9). These communities are not unique to any particular city, but occur worldwide, wherever the need arises, and thus play an integral role in the construction and assertion of one’s subjectivity, for they form another layer within the multi-layered urban environment through which individuals can shape their identity.

The functionality of these communities can be linked to Michel Foucault’s theory of the “heterotopia”. In his lecture series “Of other spaces”, Foucault conceptualised the existence of alternative spaces, which functioned “something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (1986:24). Foucault goes on to describe, at length, and with the assistance of a number of real-world examples, such as the brothel, the cemetery and the old-age home, the underlying principles of such spaces, the sixth and final of which proposes that heterotopias operate in direct correlation to

all the [other, non-heterotopian] space that remains. This function unfolds between two extreme poles. Either their role is to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory... Or else, on the contrary, their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled. This latter type would be the heterotopia, not of illusion, but of compensation.

(1986:27)

I believe the idea of a heterotopia is inherently an expansive one, allowing for a variety of different contextual manifestations, and thus I shall focus on the functionality of the various heterotopias present within a city, and the extent to which they affect both the physical make-up of the city, as well as the level of an individual's self-perception and subsequent social interaction.

With this understanding in place, it becomes apparent that the various urban communities that form in and around the city function, on one level, as heterotopias of compensation in that they compensate for the harsh, solitary and often alienating space of the city by providing a means of escape. The corollary to this is that the inherent transience of the postmodern cityscape places a strain on these urban communities, and subsequently hinders their ability to compensate their members sufficiently in this regard. This reinforces their heterotopian nature, because as Benjamin Genocchio asserts, "heterotopias constitute a discontinuous but socially defined spatiality, both material and immaterial at the same time" (1995:38). This discontinuity becomes yet another factor in an individual's struggle to maintain a meaningful place within urban society. This sense of discontinuity also seemingly underpins the narratives of both *Fury* and *Falling Man*, for both of these texts explore the disconnections that exist between their individual characters and the urban communities to which those characters either belong, or aspire to belong, particularly within a contextualised New York City.

New York, New York

With a population of over 18 million, New York City is one of the most populous metropolitan regions in the contemporary world. As well as being America's economic hub, it inevitably has been labelled "the premier metropolis of the twentieth century" (Kasinitz, 1995:85), and deemed the "heir to all other cities at once" (Baudrillard, 1994:14). Indeed, structures like the Woolworth Building, the

Empire State Building and the World Trade Centre each became the epitome of human progress and our domination of the natural world, by maintaining their status as the world's tallest building for many years after they were constructed. This authoritative status was further enhanced through the vantage point these buildings provided over the city itself, allowing any individual the opportunity of seeing the city anew. De Certeau argues this point by stating that

[t]o be lifted to the summit of the World Trade Center is to be lifted out of the city's grasp... When one goes up there, he leaves behind the mass that carries off and mixes up in itself any identity of author and spectator... His elevation transfigures him into a voyeur. It puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was 'possessed' into a text that lies before one's eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god.

(1988:92)

This "monarch-of-all-I-survey" perspective speaks to Frisby's redefinition of the contemporary *flâneur*, because it provides a distinct perceptual shift in how one can view the city. This perceptual shift can also be linked to Calvino's second method of escape because of the distance it creates between, as de Certeau writes, "the identity of author and spectator", which is why this method becomes relevant in my analysis in chapter three. Throughout *Falling Man*, DeLillo's characters are struggling to maintain this distance in light of their perceived roles in the events of 9/11, events that culminated in the collapse of the WTC towers and the permanent removal of that distinct vantage point.

For the vast majority of the world's population, though, the extent of New York's influence is largely due to global media saturation, and it does not take much of a leap to argue, as Deborah Stevenson does, that, New York itself is merely a media construction (2003:1). Indeed,

in the absence of personal experience, the identity of a delineated place is defined according to popular perceptions of the place and the dominant impressions that are ascribed to it deliberately or otherwise. This process is a significant factor contributing to the development of positive and negative images of place, including the stereotype of the stigmatized neighbourhood, suburb, city or region.

(2003:69)

Thus, through works of art, literature, films and television series, people from all over the world have continually been exposed to the images and sounds of New York City, to the extent that one may begin to feel as knowledgeable about the workings of that city as any native New Yorker. This feel for New York is intrinsically linked to the look of the city itself, for as Stevenson goes on to argue,

“the skyline of Manhattan is instantly recognisable and globally familiar even though the majority of the world's population has never been there and will never go” (2003:1). In this sense, Manhattan *is* New York not only by virtue of including the city's central business district, but through the symbolism that is contained within its own make-up: the many skyscrapers that dominate its skyline, mirroring the city's prosperity and power, the large expanse of Central Park that offers a natural respite from the chaos of the city and, of course, the idea that Manhattan is, itself, an island, at once separate from the surrounding landscape, unique in its own right, but also connected to the rest of the city and America via a number of landmark bridges, just as a heart is connected to the body via the aorta.⁵

A number of New York's other neighbourhoods and boroughs, however, have not been looked on as favourably as Manhattan, often stereotypically becoming associated with a certain race, class or culture, or as sites of social unrest. Indeed, for a long period, “the South Bronx was the symbol of urban disrepair [and] place names like Forest Hills, Bensonhurst, Howard Beach, and Crown Heights were emblems of urban strife” (Reitano, 2006:183–184). These negative perceptions have subsequently lingered in the imaginations of anyone who resides or works in these areas, influencing the construction of their identities and those of the social communities to which they belong, as well as defining the nature of their interaction with the urban and suburban environments of these and other areas within New York.

I am aware that this mode of analysis could be extended to many of the world's other major cities, but I believe it is New York's unique history that most influences this city's perceptual construction, and affirms New York's position as a dominant world-city. These various perceptions have been sustained by the history and the people of the city itself, and most particularly, by the idea of the American Dream, which promises a new start in life for anyone willing and able. Indeed, the American Dream quintessentially has been a dream of New York, for even from the city's founding by the Dutch West India Company early in the seventeenth century,

⁵ For more on the symbolism of bridges in relation to the dual separateness and connectedness of everyday human life, see Simmel's essay “Bridge and door” (1903), and the section on bridges in Martin Heidegger's “Building, dwelling, thinking” (1971).

primarily to supplement existent trade routes between Europe and its western colonies, New York has been viewed as the gateway to the New World. It was also this dream that caused New York's population to grow exponentially during the subsequent centuries, bolstered by immigrants of various nationalities, all of whom were attracted to the prospects on offer. The extent of this immigration was such that by 1860, over half of New York's population was foreign born, and by 1990, "people of color comprised the majority of New Yorkers, making it truly a 'global city' and changing its politics accordingly" (Reitano, 2006:56,183).

New York City's diversity has thus often been a point of contention for both New Yorkers and the rest of America. It was the very nature of this diversity that led James Fenimore Cooper, native New Yorker and most famously the author of *The Leather Stocking Tales*, to reorientate the city towards a much grander focus by stating, "New York is essentially national in interest, position, [and] pursuits. No one thinks of the place as belonging to a particular state, but to the United States" (cited in Reitano, 2006:5). This view is echoed by Thomas Bender, who argues that New York is "thought to be not quite like the rest of the nation, not really American" (2002:246), perhaps because the city "tends to think of [itself] as better than the nation, assuming that the nation would be better off being New York... writ large" (246). Despite this perceived sense of New York as being far more nationally significant than any other city, and despite its perpetual dominance in the nation's political and economic arenas, New York is not the capital of the United States, nor is it even the capital of New York State, but rather functions seemingly autonomously, as an entity within the larger national structure.⁶ This sense of difference has often generated a vague uneasiness about the motivations of the people living and working within the bounds of its cityscape, perhaps most succinctly noted by US Vice-President Joseph Biden, then in his role as a New York State senator, who observed that "[c]ities are viewed as the seed of corruption and duplicity, and New York is the biggest City" (cited in Kasinitz, 1995:87).

Joanne Reitano, on the other hand, views the contrasting elements of this city in a far more positive light, stating that "in [a] testimony to its vitality, New York has

⁶ New York was the temporary capital of the US from 1785–1789, though, while Washington DC was being purposefully built to take over as national capital.

had more names than any other city” (2006:7). From its origins as New Amsterdam, through the many nicknames it has acquired over the years, such as Gotham, Fun City, The Empire City, The City that Never Sleeps and The Big Apple, we are constantly “remind[ed]... that the history of the city is multifaceted and ever changing” (7). Often, however, the ease with which New York adopted another label has been used to disparage the city, rather than promote its dynamism. This tendency was no more evident than during the 1970s, when New York’s already waning public image plummeted even further due to multiple accounts of mismanagement by city officials, which resulted in a city-wide fiscal crisis that saw “mountains of refuse left to rot during week-long garbage strikes, subways spray-painted by brazen bands of teenagers, and crafty muggers staking out airports, train stations, and hotels” (Greenburg, 2008:6). In her account of this tumultuous period in New York’s history, Miriam Greenburg argues that “[a]s much as Paris was the symbolic capital of the rising capitalist metropolis in the nineteenth century, New York came to epitomize the declining industrial city of the 1970s” (38). This downward spiral, and its effect on New Yorkers, was perhaps best epitomised through the ‘Fear City’ campaign of 1975, which was launched as a response to the mayoral proposal for severe citywide labour cuts that were to offset the deepening economic pressures. In June of that year, the newly formed Committee for Public Safety

printed one million four-page pamphlets emblazoned with a shrouded skull and entitled ‘Welcome to Fear City – A Survival Guide for Visitors to the City of New York’ [which] detailed the wave of crime, arson and violence that would overtake the city in the wake of the proposed budgets cuts... [and warned that] ‘until things change, [you should] stay away from New York City if you possibly can’.

(Greenburg, 2008:134)

This campaign, while short-lived, left a lingering mark on New York’s image as it represented another heterotopia with which city residents and tourists had to contend, or, to return to Foucault’s terminology, it generated a heterotopia of illusion that was aimed at denigrating the ‘real’ space of the city. The fact that New Yorkers would go to such lengths to warn people to stay away from the city, spoke volumes about their relationship with the city itself, for it showed that there was a distinct disconnection between these inhabitants and the cityscape. The Fear City campaign thus defamiliarised New York through its instrumentalisation of the city’s functionality.

This negative heterotopian vision was further exacerbated during the “fateful summer of 1977, when the serial killer ‘Son of Sam’ terrorized the populace, a city-wide blackout led to widespread looting, and [there were] a rash of fires in the South Bronx” (Greenburg, 2008:6). To counter this, New York officials launched the first marketing campaign aimed at reinvigorating a city’s public image, and in doing so, generated a heterotopia of compensation, that is, an alternative perception of New York’s city-space that was now marketed as the primary space which New Yorkers and tourists alike would want to inhabit, rather than the space from which they should retreat. Greenburg explains that this campaign centred on the I♥NY logo designed by Milton Glaser, which “represented none of this messy, everyday reality that New Yorkers lived through at this time. Rather, the PR campaign sought to tap into people’s collectively held mental representations of New York as a better place and to communicate this through the use of the media” (206). The campaign was an unequivocal success because it re-orientated the focus of New Yorkers, Americans, and the rest of the world away from the prevailing negative imagery of the 1970s, by reawakening the idea of New York as America’s heart, and its people as the lifeblood of the American Dream. Indeed, Greenburg goes onto argue that “the branding of New York constituted a process of both the real and symbolic commodification of the city, and of the simultaneous production and marketing of a hegemonic, consumer-driven and investor-orientated vision of New York” (11). This conceptual shift was thus integral to the construction of an imagined city *out of* a real one, which is something that both Rushdie and DeLillo do in the creation of their fictionalised New Yorks.

Novel Interpretations

I have chosen to concentrate my analyses on *Fury* and *Falling Man* not only because their conceptions of New York differ, as result of the contextualisation of the city in each novel, but also because it struck me that these novels feed into one another, particularly within the framework of the ‘before’ and ‘after’ dialectic they establish. The prescience of *Fury*’s concluding chapters is carried through the months that separate the contextualised narratives, and is legitimised by the 9/11 attacks, which,

in turn, form the foundation of *Falling Man*'s narrative explorations, a connection on which I will further elaborate in chapter two.

What I also find interesting about this connection is that it arises out of the work of two authors who could be considered two of the most influential contemporary novelists, but who are approaching their subject matter, in each case, from vastly different contexts. As one of the pre-eminent contemporary postmodern American authors, DeLillo's novels have "provide[d] readily identifiable, highly stylized analyses of what could be called postmodern culture – analyses that are inflected by such notions as self-referentiality, the fragility of human identity, or the blurring of the line between reality and culturally pervasive, manufactured representations of it" (Green, 2003:730). Born in the Bronx to Italian-American parents, DeLillo has spent the better part of his life living in or around New York, which affords him an intimate understanding of the cityscape and its people. Indeed, the influence of the city on DeLillo's life can be seen in his works, most of which feature the city to some degree, either as its setting, or as a point of reference. The World Trade Centre, itself, featured prominently in many of DeLillo's prior novels, including *Players* (1977), *Underworld* (1997) and *Cosmopolis* (2003). In fact, the towers were eerily portrayed, veiled in dark clouds, on the cover of the first edition of *Underworld*, a novel that features New York as a setting and which covers the span of the Cold War, beginning with the Soviet Union's demise in the early 1990s and working back to the detonation of the first Hydrogen bomb in 1951. Adam Thurschwell labels the WTC in *Underworld* "as a figure of the world-mastery that the United States achieved during the Cold War through the development of its economic and technological powers – the very symbolism that made the towers a prime target of Al Qaeda's resentment" (2007, online). Thurschwell goes on to argue that *Underworld*'s epilogue

is portrayed less as a discrete bookend corresponding to the explosion of the Soviet bomb than as a petering out, a loss of the world-organizing structure and national purpose that the Cold War, for all of its dread, provided. In that sense, the destruction of the World Trade towers on September 11 is the novel's conclusion that DeLillo himself could not write, since it has come to signify precisely that missing bookend, an end of one historical epoch and the beginning of another.

(2007, online)

While Thurschwell uses DeLillo's short story entitled "Still-Life", published in *The New Yorker* in April 2007, as the basis of his argument, I believe his sentiment can be

extended to *Falling Man* itself, for “Still-Life” is essentially an extract from this novel, providing a pared down account of how the novel’s central family, the Neudecker’s, deal with the trauma of the attacks. Indeed, Thurschwell’s analysis rightfully positions the WTC towers as the central figures in this short story, as they are in *Falling Man*. The novel opens (and closes) with their destruction, and their presence is felt throughout the narrative. The significance of this persistence will be examined in chapter three.

While New York may be a familiar setting for DeLillo, Rushdie is a relative newcomer to the city. Not only had Rushdie moved to New York just prior to writing *Fury*, but this novel is his first to be set almost entirely within its cityscape.⁷ Firmly entrenched in the diasporic context afforded to him by his move from the colonial India of his birth to London, Rushdie’s postmodern, and indeed, postcolonial novels, such as *Midnight’s Children* and the controversial *The Satanic Verses*, have awarded him significant authorial status because of the unique ways in which their narratives were shaped through his manipulation of language and imagery. Rushdie’s ‘late arrival’ into the world of postmodern *American* fiction, however, has proved to be one of the strongest criticisms against him, a sense of which pervades many reviews of *Fury* itself, and on which I will elaborate in chapter two. Nevertheless, Rushdie has also developed a keen affinity for the city, perhaps most explicitly expressed in his response to 9/11. In the October 2001 edition of his then regular monthly column for the *New York Times*, Rushdie conveyed his dismay at the events of that day, stating that “[t]hey broke our city. I’m among the newest of New Yorkers, but even people who have never set foot in Manhattan have felt her wounds, because New York in our time is the beating heart of the visible world” (Rushdie, 2003:391). This affinity also emerges in Rushdie’s conceptualisation of New York’s cityscape in *Fury*, but is seemingly tinged with doubt and cynicism throughout, perhaps as a direct result of Rushdie’s own insecurities about his move to the city.

The city of New York in both *Fury* and *Falling Man* thus becomes a form of heterotopia. For like the imagined New Yorks conjured by the city’s various names,

⁷ *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, published in 1999, does feature New York as a setting, but its narrative focus is decidedly more global.

or created through its strategic marketing campaigns, these novels (re)present an alternate (re)construction of this city, which functions as a counter-site in which “all the other real sites that can be found within [the real-world city] are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (Foucault, 1986:24). Indeed, in his exegesis, *Postmodernist Fiction*, which has become a cornerstone for any postmodern literary analysis, Brian McHale extends Foucault’s argument here by stating that “[t]he heterotopian zone of postmodernist writing... is less constructed than *deconstructed* by the text, or rather [it is] constructed and deconstructed at the same time” (1987:45, original emphasis). This dynamic can best be explained by adapting one of Foucault’s own examples on the functionality of a heterotopia (1986:24), and substituting ‘the novel’ for his ‘mirror’. For I believe that upon our reading of these novels, we begin to perceive all the spaces that the characters occupy within each text’s urban society as real, because they are connected with all the familiar spaces that can be found in our day-to-day urban lives, whether in New York or elsewhere, and also unreal, since in order to be perceived, those familiarised spaces within each novel have to pass through a virtual point, the fictionalised world of the novel itself, which is separate from us and thus still fundamentally other in our minds. This real–unreal dialectic is evident in both *Fury* and *Falling Man*, in the former, through the narrative and metaphorical parallels Rushdie sets up between New York, America and the fictional worlds his protagonist creates, and in the latter, through the seeming ‘unreality’ of the WTC attacks themselves.

In the chapters to follow, then, through detailed contextual, textual and character analyses of *Fury* and *Falling Man*, I will explore the various ways in which these urban spaces manifest themselves, both on the page and in the mind of the reader, in an attempt to engage with the dialectical nature of the relationship between space/place and the individual. I will thus ultimately assess the functionality of New York as both a global space, subject to the pressures (and dangers) of the contemporary world, as well as an individualised private space, in which the trauma of city life is actualised, processed and then re-integrated into the diverse experiences of city-space. Indeed, the connections between physical and emotional trauma and the individual consciousness, as examined by Freud and, more recently, by Dominic LaCapra, will form the basis of my analysis within chapter three. To

this end, I believe my reading of these two novels will show how that trauma manifested itself not only as a result of the violence enacted upon the cityscape through the destruction of the WTC, but also because it was *already* present within the lives of those living in New York at the time.

University Of Cape Town

Chapter Two

- The Retrospective Reality of *Fury* -

'I have also thought of a model city from which I deduce all others,' Marco answered. 'It is a city made only of exceptions, exclusions, incongruities, contradictions. If such a city is probable, by reducing the number of elements, we increase the probability that the city really exists... But I cannot force my operation beyond a certain limit: I would achieve cities too probable to be real.'

(Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, 1974)

[New York City] is transformed into a textuology in which extremes coincide – extremes of ambition and degradation, brutal oppositions of races and styles, contrasts between yesterday's buildings, already transformed into trash cans, and today's irruptions that block out its space. Unlike Rome, New York has never learned the art of growing old by playing on all its pasts. Its present invents itself, from hour to hour, in the act of throwing away its previous accomplishments and challenging the future.

(Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 1984)

In his April 1999 column for *The New York Times*, Salman Rushdie defends his use of rock music as the primary theme of his then recently published novel, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, by discussing the popular use of this kind of music as a form of social protest. Here he elaborates on the radical changes that global politics, economics and culture underwent during the 1990s, arguing that

the music of freedom frightens people and unleashes all manner of conservative defence mechanisms... [For while] [t]he collapse of communism [and] the destruction of the Iron Curtain and the Wall, was supposed to usher in a new era of liberty... the post-Cold War world [was instead] suddenly formless and full of possibility [that] sacred many of us stiff. We retreated behind smaller iron curtains, built smaller stockades, imprisoned ourselves in narrower, ever more fanatical definitions of ourselves – religious, regional, ethnic – and readied ourselves for war.

(2003:301)

In retrospect, this sentiment seems all the more profound, especially when read in conjunction with Rushdie's January 2000 column, in which he predicted that "the defining struggle of the new age would be between Terrorism and Security" (2003:326). That war did arrive, and did indeed define the first decade of this new century through the campaign against global terrorism, spearheaded by the US in Afghanistan and Iraq as a direct result of the 9/11 attacks on New York's World Trade Centre (WTC) and the Pentagon in Washington DC.

I believe this use of hindsight is an expedient way to re-evaluate literary works that failed to engage the reader sufficiently on their initial release, because a retrospective analysis often unveils a range of contextual and narrative elements that previously garnered little or no significance. One such text is Rushdie's *Fury*, which, on its publication in 2001, was declared a failed experiment by many critics, but which can be appreciated retrospectively for the profundity of its insights into its spatial and temporal context: New York City in the summer of the year 2000. For it is here that Rushdie's understanding of postmodern American culture, however recently it may have been acquired, is at its most astute and provocative. Thus, through an examination of the extent to which Rushdie has used the fictional lives of *Fury*'s characters to illuminate and question the "style of life" of New York at the height of its success, as well as to contrast the state of his own life in New York at that time, I will analyse how perceptively this novel portrays the urban social mindset at the turn of the twenty-first century, and provides the context for the 9/11 attacks.

Postmodern America and the Rushdie–Solanka–Kronos Parallel

One of the primary criticisms of *Fury* has been the belief that its narrative is nothing more than a thinly veiled defence of Rushdie's own life, a "flailing apologia [that] seems to want us to read it as a species of feverish diary" (Wood, 2001:32). Indeed, *Fury*'s protagonist, Professor Malik Solanka, a "retired historian of ideas [and an] irascible dollmaker" (Rushdie, 2002:3), is undoubtedly premised on Rushdie himself. The similarities between the two are numerous, as is evidenced by the close proximity of their ages, their similar childhoods in Bombay before moving to London to attend university, their two marriages, and their subsequent abandonment of their second wives and sons in London to move to New York, where they both had affairs with young Indian women. Even Neela Mahendra, the second of two women with whom Solanka gets involved in New York, loosely reads as a fictionalised version of Padma Lakshmi, Rushdie's mistress at the time of writing (later his third wife) and the woman to whom *Fury* is dedicated.

In a 2008 interview with the *International Herald Tribune*, Rushdie did finally admit that two of his characters had loosely autobiographical roots: Saleem Sinai from

Midnight's Children is one, and Malik Solanka is the other. Nevertheless, he went to great lengths to insist that each of those characters has ultimately “become their own entities” within the context of their narratives, and that he was shocked to hear how many critics had “assumed strong parallels between [himself] and Solanka, a character who one night nearly kills his sleeping wife” (Abrams, cited in Finney, 2009:278–279). Despite Rushdie’s declarations to the contrary, the inclination to read *Fury* as a disguised autobiography is tempting. One cannot help feeling that Solanka’s preoccupations with Neela’s status as “the most beautiful Indian woman – the most beautiful *woman* – he had ever seen” (Rushdie, 2002:61), are merely Rushdie’s own attempts to impress Ms Lakshmi. Or even that Solanka’s paranoia about being pursued by the Furies, who step right out of the pages of Greek mythology and into the guises of his estranged wife, Eleanor, his first mistress, Mila Milo, and Neela Mahendra, is simply Rushdie cathartically trying to work through whatever sense of guilt he might have had over abandoning his own wife and child. In reviewing *Fury* for *New Republic*, James Wood (cited above), argues that this novel’s failure stems specifically from the blurring of the boundary between author and character, and that this is not merely “a small complaint; not just a pedantic fussing about ‘point of view’”. For this instability of voice, this anarchy of borrowed languages, infiltrates and infects the fabric of the storytelling. A cartoonish and inauthentic voice produces a cartoonish and inauthentic reality” (2001:34).

Since the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, and the subsequent imposition of the fatwa by Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini in February 1989, Rushdie’s life, along with his literary works, have increasingly been subject to the fickle and often caustic nature of public perception, so much so that “[f]or a decade, Rushdie was compelled to live like a fugitive and forced into cloak and dagger operations in order to meet friends or journalists” (Malik, 2009:10), fearing his death would come at the hands of one of the millions of orthodox Muslims he had so deeply offended through his satirical portrayal of the Prophet Mohammed in *The Satanic Verses*. Rushdie has since commented at length about the many ways in which this ‘death warrant’ affected his life, including the admission that “it seriously damaged my reputation as a writer... [I]t made many people think that I must be, as I was accused of being, a bad, arrogant, unreadable, turgid, theological, polemical, who-

needs-it writer” (Rose, cited in Reder, 2000:210). This acknowledgement, together with his description of the fatwa as a “violation”, akin to a violent home invasion in which “men wielding clubs were to... arrive when you’re making love, or standing naked in the shower... or staring in deep inward silence at the lines you’ve scrawled on a page” (Rushdie, 2003:293), enables us to identify the ways in which Rushdie has internalised these reactions within his work. Each of the novels Rushdie has written post-fatwa reflects some of this “inward silence” and “heaviness” (294), either in its narrative construction, or through the experiences of its fictional characters.⁸ Thus, what critics view in *Fury* as Rushdie’s solipsistic attempt to justify his own actions, is simply his “inward silence” being redirected outward, now more explicitly than ever, into the world of the novel, and so it should be contextualised in the same way as one would a narrative device, for that is, in effect, what the fictionalisation of his own life experiences becomes, in relation to that fictional world.

A number of academics, including Sarah Brouillette (2005), Brian Finney (2009) and Madelena Gonzalez (2005), have recognised this shift in Rushdie’s post-fatwa writings as one that was thus seemingly inevitable, given the immense amount of social pressure under which he found himself. Brouillette focuses on the idea of authorship within Rushdie’s latest works, and in particular, how the inherent politicisation of his novels has altered the dynamics of their reception. To this end, Brouillette defends Rushdie’s conceptualisations in *Fury* by arguing that

[w]hat needs to be acknowledged is that [this] book is not about Rushdie’s life, but about ‘Rushdie’ as brand name, as paratext, and as icon. It concerns the very process through which ‘Rushdie’ then turns his ‘backstory’ – a story defined by the contentious politicization of literary works – into yet another book, available again for scrutiny and critique.

(2005:151)

Similarly, by drawing attention to Rushdie’s use of postmodern narrative devices such as pastiche, intertextuality and allusion, Finney argues that the primary purpose of *Fury*, is “to comment in fictional form on the nature of the postmodern world of which [Rushdie] is so much a part and to which his novels have contributed, but which also has been responsible for the many ways in which his

⁸ For specific examples of the dynamics of this shift within Rushdie’s post-fatwa novels see Dohra Ahmed’s “‘This fundo stuff is really something new’: Fundamentalism and hybridity in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*” (2009) and Gonzalez’s *Fiction after the Fatwa: Salman Rushdie and the Charm of Catastrophe* (2005).

work has been misunderstood” (2009:281). In her account of Rushdie’s *Fiction after the Fatwa* (2005), Gonzalez emphasises how the fatwa altered Rushdie’s own sense of subjectivity, as it became “a central primal trauma irrevocably making of [Rushdie] a thinker/writer after the fact, a position which colludes with the de-realization of the contemporary postworld struggling to signify in its uncanny present, haunted by the spectres of a past familiarity which has now become strange” (2005:20). Evidently drawing on Freud’s theory of the Uncanny, Gonzalez goes on to shift the focus away from questions of narrative authenticity, by highlighting how many of Rushdie’s post-fatwa works, including *Fury*, belie a question of authenticity altogether through the cognitive dissonance that is present within many of his characters.⁹

The collusion to which Gonzalez refers is particularly evident in *Fury* through the story of Little Brain, Solanka’s principal creation that was, “first a doll, later a puppet, then an animated cartoon and afterwards an actress... or a talk show host, gymnast, ballerina or supermodel (2002:96), and also “[t]he only one of his creations with whom [Solanka] fell in love” (96). Indeed, these many incarnations gave life, and more importantly, an identity and a distinct subjectivity to what had been a lifeless doll, a simulacrum within the world of the television programme in which she was to act as host and the “audience’s surrogate” (17), as she travelled far and wide in her time machine to “goad... the great minds of the ages into surprising revelations” (17). In *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard builds on Saussure’s principle of the abstract relationship between a signifier (a sign or image) and what it signifies (meaning, emotion, or the thing in itself), by arguing that in the postmodern world, there is a “transition from signs that dissimulate something to signs that dissimulate that there is nothing” (1994:6). This transition is evident through Little Brain’s commercial appropriation and subsequent transmogrification from a representation of an idea into another simulacrum, now becoming a person, rather than a thing, but a person who was, nevertheless, still a work of fiction, a creative imagining that only existed in front of a camera. Thus, in detailing Solanka’s horror at this transition, this re-imagining of Little Brain into “an imposter, with the wrong history, the wrong dialogue, the wrong personality, the

⁹ See Freud’s essay “The Uncanny” (1919) for a detailed account of how this notion affects the construction of one’s identity.

wrong wardrobe, the wrong *brain*... [who became] the kind of monster of tawdry celebrity he most profoundly abhorred” (Rushdie, 2001:99), Rushdie is also describing the process through which his own magnum opus, *The Satanic Verses*, became more than simply a work of fiction. For, “[j]ust as *The Satanic Verses* took on a life of its own after offending a large segment of the Muslim world, so Solanka’s principal puppet, Little Brain, offends the Vatican and is censored, before being completely appropriated and commercialized by the media and corporate business” (Finney, 2009:279).

Baudrillard goes on to categorise the successive phases of an image as it undergoes this transition from representation to simulacrum. The first of these sees that image start out as a reflection of reality that, through repeated use, begins to mask reality, and then the seeming absence of that reality, before becoming its own pure simulacrum that no longer bears any relation to any reality whatsoever (1994:6). We see this evolution (or perhaps devolution) of the image through the changes that Little Brain undergoes, as well as in the account of The Puppet Kings, the next major creative project on which Solanka embarks, only to have it follow the same trajectory as Little Brain. Indeed, the significance of the backstory to The Puppet Kings is signalled through its inclusion as a separate chapter within *Fury* itself, for it extends the parallel between Rushdie and Solanka’s creative work even further by being a fictionalisation of Solanka’s own life and experiences.

In this backstory, Solanka creates a technologically advanced world on the brink of destruction, which would see “that highest of cultures... just then enjoying the richest and most prolonged golden age in its history” (Rushdie, 2002:161), be engulfed by the rising seas caused by that world’s now severely melting polar ice caps. Solanka places Professor Akasz Kronos, “the great cynical cyberneticist of the Rijk” (161), into this apocalyptic setting and has him create the Puppet Kings, a race of cyborgs that were meant to be the salvation of mankind, but “on account of the flaw in [Kronos’s] character that made him unable to consider the general good, he used them to guarantee nobody’s survival but his own” (161). Using his “Machiavellian daring and skill” (162), Kronos sets up his headquarters on the mountainous island nation of Baburia by negotiating a lease from that nation’s ruler, the Mogul. Here he teaches his creations that they are “faster, stronger,

smarter – ‘better’... than their human antipodean hosts” (163), and gives each creation “its own sharply delineated personality” (164). But, perhaps as a direct result of Solanka’s previous disillusionment with the outcome of Little Brain’s story, he has Kronos include a Prime Directive in the Puppet Kings’ programming, turning them into his slaves, “obliged to obey [him], even to the point of acquiescing to their own destruction, should he deem that necessary” (163). The Prime Directive fails, however, and the Puppet Kings ultimately turn their backs on their creator. Thus, there inevitably occurs a moment within this secondary narrative where the Mogul and Kronos debate the uncanny nature of life itself, that is, whether all life is necessarily ‘natural’, or whether “life as brought into being by the imagination and the skill of the living”, can be said to be alive, and therefore, be awarded the same considerations in terms of human rights” (188). This debate soon turns to argument, though, and “[r]eminiscent of the fatwa issued against Rushdie, the Mogul threatens Kronos with death if he doesn’t abandon his defence of the world of the imagination” (Finney, 2009:288). Thus, seemingly forsaken by the very creations he seeks to defend, and in fear for his life, Kronos recants his position, something which Rushdie, however, never did, and this “was greeted by the religious Baburian people as a mighty victory” (Rushdie, 2002:189).

To highlight further parallels between his fictional creations and the ‘real-world’, Rushdie employs multiple accounts of *mise-en-abyme* in this novel, perhaps the most apparent being the Rushdie–Solanka–Kronos parallel itself. Our reading of *The Puppet Kings* also highlights the fact that the civilisation of the Rijk is simply a fictionalised future America. The island nation of Baburia, and the subsequent political turmoil that takes place there as the Puppet Kings rise up and overthrow the Baburians, are also a simulation of events on the fictional islands of Lilliput-Blefuscu where, towards the latter part of the novel, the Indo-Lilliputians stage a military coup to oust the indigenous Elbees. This, itself, is a simulation of the real-world coup that occurred in Fiji in May 2000. This *mise-en-abyme* becomes even more elaborate when, in *Fury*’s final chapters, Rushdie includes Solanka’s decision to follow Neela to her native Lilliput-Blefuscu, only to find every member of the island’s militia donning masks of his own creations, the Puppet Kings, essentially enacting the very simulation on which that story was based. The irony within in all

of this, though, is that Solanka, whose appearance is identical to that of Kronos, is taken for an imposter of the man who is deemed by the islanders to be the 'real' Kronos: Babur, the leader of the military coup. "[O]nce again, Solanka's fictional creations began to burst out of their cages and take to the streets" (Rushdie, 2002:225), making "the original, the man with no mask... the imitator" (238). The story of *The Puppet Kings*, as well as the events on Lilliput-Blefuscu, each function as yet another heterotopia, in that they mirror not only life within the fictionalised world of the novel, but also that of the real world from which Rushdie has drawn inspiration. We can also link these heterotopias back to Lefebvre's concept of representational space, for they become a space that is "directly lived through its associated images and symbols" (1991:39), at least within the world of the novel, because the fictionalised images of the Puppet Kings are actualised into the equally fictional political sphere of Lilliput-Blefuscu.

The use of masks, in this regard, is also inherently linked to real-world politics and culture. In *The Jaguar Smile*, Rushdie comments on a Sandinista-controlled Nicaragua that was embattled in guerrilla-style warfare with a US-funded Contra, and in which he spent two weeks in July 1986 as an observer. Here he notes that "during the insurrection, Sandinista guerrillas often went into action wearing masks of pink mesh with simple faces on them" (2000:14). While the play of masks on Lilliput-Blefuscu is far more elaborate than these simple constructions, their true purpose is very much the same, that is, not one of concealment, but of transformation (15). Thus, through this interplay between simulations and real-world events, Rushdie illustrates how "the rebellion in Lilliput-Blefuscu parallels the internal psychological rebellion witnessed in the novel's many representative Americans" (Finney, 2009:287), specifically those, like Jack Rhinehart and Mila Milo, who use New York's urban constructs to mask their own subjective traumas.¹⁰ Thus Solanka's, and in turn, Rushdie's, "fictional creations, directly drawn from the political struggles of contemporary life, suffer not the fate of irrelevance or passing fashion, but rather... dramatize the extent to which political life has a fictional, cultural valency, as political movements adopt styles dependent

¹⁰ I will elaborate on the significance of the traumas faced by these characters later in this chapter.

on cultural ideologies and the resources of the culture industries” (Brouillette, 2005:149).

Fredric Jameson’s discussions of science fiction may also be applied to this interplay in *Fury*, for although it is not a science fiction novel, Rushdie engages with this genre through the stories of Little Brain and The Puppet Kings. Jameson proposes that works of science fiction “can occasionally be looked at as a way of breaking through to history in a new way; achieving a distinctive historical consciousness by way of the future rather than the past; and becoming conscious of our present as the past of some unexpected future, rather than as the future of a heroic national past” (Stephanson and Jameson, 1989:18). Indeed, through the many examples of *mise-en-abyme* within this novel, I believe Rushdie is making a statement about his own past and present actions, through a conscious refusal to apologise for his own creative work, which, once written, necessarily becomes a part of the world on which it comments, and thus, just like the Puppet Kings and Little Brain, is no longer controlled by its creator. In this light, what was labelled as a “convoluted [and] elaborate replay of the creator-creation question and of commerce’s corruption of art” (Eber, 2001, online) is, in fact, a legitimate account of how a novel can “become the very thing it describes. [For] [n]ot only does it portray a society in the grip of an extreme form of alienation induced by commodity fetishism where collective consciousness is dying, but it becomes part of that world by espousing its language and ways of seeing” (Gonzalez, 2005:29). What Wood and other critics have viewed as an inauthentic portrayal of the ‘zeitgeist’ of New York in the year 2000, is revealed, instead, as being fairly intuitive. Through an emphasis on tired metaphors and narrative diatribes that are introduced through the numerous intertextual and extra-textual references, Rushdie is illustrating Marshall McLuhan’s idea that the medium is indeed the message, by “simultaneously celebrating and deprecating the undifferentiated *bricolage* of trivia and significant events which constitute postmodern culture (Finney, 2009:282). Thus, what Aravind Adiga lambasted as Rushdie’s unnecessary use of bathos in “his desperation to prove his hipness by making asinine references to pop culture” (2005:52), is merely Rushdie’s demonstration “that postmodern man can only step from fiction to fiction” (Gonzalez, 2005:193). For, “[h]ow else can one describe

[this contemporary] culture but by evoking its quickly forgotten products as well as its more memorable events?" (Finney, 2009:282).

Retrospective Apocalyptic Imaginings

It may be argued that Rushdie's engagement with this form of American postmodernism offers nothing new, especially in the light of the work of notable American authors, such as Doctorow, Roth, Pynchon, Auster and DeLillo, to name a few, who have frequently dealt with these postmodern issues. Nevertheless, Rushdie's contribution to this canon should not be undervalued, for, as I mentioned earlier, its significance in *Fury* arises out of a retrospective reading that draws attention to its insightful contextualisation of New York City as a seething, megalomaniacal entity on the brink of disaster. Thus, one of Rushdie's key concerns in this novel is the inherently transient nature of success, and indeed, of any level of happiness within "this age of simulacra and counterfeits [where] phoney experience... feels so good... you actually prefer it to the real thing" (2002:232). All of the main characters' lives are constantly plagued by doubt, by the unattainability of what they desire, or by the fear that all they had achieved would somehow dissolve into nothing, for "[h]ere in Boom America... in the doubloon-heavy pot at the rainbow's end, human expectations were at the highest levels in human history, and so, therefore, were human disappointments" (184). It is this fear of failure that frames much of the action in this novel, and generates the antagonism, and indeed, the fury present within each of the characters.

Just as this fear and doubt are present in the lives of *Fury*'s fictional characters, so too do they manifest themselves in our minds, as a sense of foreboding. In the text, we are introduced to New York as a city that "boiled with money" (3), one that was preoccupied by the "new technology [that] had [it] by the ears... [and by] the unimaginable future that had just begun to begin" (4). In the year 2000, that future had suddenly become the present, and it dawned like any other on New Year's Day, without all the chaos that had been predicted by the millennialism that had gained momentum within certain religious and right-wing communities during the

latter part of the twentieth century.¹¹ Slavoj Žižek explains this dynamic in the first chapter of *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*, by drawing on the concept of the Lacanian Real¹², as well as Alain Badiou's 'passion for the Real',¹³ to argue that "[i]n contrast to the nineteenth century of utopian or 'scientific' projects and ideals, plans for the future, the twentieth century aimed at delivering the thing itself – the Real in its extreme violence" (2002:5). There is a distinct correlation between Žižek's notion of the Real and Rushdie's depiction of life in New York during the year 2000, for Rushdie writes that this was a time in which "[h]uman life was now lived in the moment before the fury, when the anger grew, or the moment during – the fury's hour, the time of the beast set free – or in the ruined aftermath of a great violence, when the fury ebbed and chaos abated, until the tide began, once again, to turn" (Rushdie, 2002:129). While this passage stems from Solanka's own self-loathing, its significance lies in his (and subsequently Rushdie's) extension of the violence to those around him, for in New York, as in the rest of the world, "[p]eople snarled and cowered in the rubble of their own misdeeds" (129). This passage also reifies time as a series of moments that centre on this violence, which is a tendency that Frank Kermode notes as being particularly evident within the framework of an apocalyptic imagination. For it is here that, "the belief that one's own age is [always] transitional... turns into a belief that the transition itself becomes an age, a *saeculum*" (Kermode, 1967:101), and this, Kermode goes on to argue, becomes "our way of registering the conviction that the end is immanent rather than imminent" (101).

¹¹ Perhaps the most prevalent of these fears had been the Y2K scare, in which all the computers in the world, supposedly unable to compute the two-digit year ending in 00, would become inoperable, heralding global economic disaster, and the beginning of Biblical Revelation. For a more detailed account of the urban and rural subcultures that were most affected by millennial predictions like Y2K, see James Berger's "Twentieth-Century Apocalypses: Forecasts and Aftermaths" (2000) and "Technomillennialism: A Subcultural Response to the Threat of Y2K" by Andrea H. Tapia (2003).

¹² Reconceptualising Freud's relationship between the Id, the Ego and the Superego within human psychosocial behavior, Lacan differentiated between three psychic structures, which he labelled as the Three Orders: the Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real. For Žižek's purposes, the Real is that which emerges once "the deceptive layers of reality" (2002:6) have been "peeled off" (6), but owing to the very nature of the postmodern hyperreality in which we live (cf. Jameson), any attempt to engage with the Real sees it be transformed into "(a)nother semblance... [O]n account of its traumatic/excessive character, we are unable to integrate it into (what we experience as) our reality, and therefore are compelled to experience it as a nightmarish apparition" (19).

¹³ See Badiou's *The Century* (2007).

This sense of immanence does not dissipate, even at the end of *Fury*. Rushdie's final sentence places Solanka on a jumping castle, shrieking to his son "Look at me, Asmaan! I'm bouncing very well! I'm bouncing higher and higher!" (2002:259). On reading these words and thus finishing the novel, we seem to hang in the air with Solanka, perpetually suspended at the moment of his zenith, anticipating what seems to be the inevitable outcome: our Fall. Rushdie adapted these final words from the epigraph to F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) which was set in the roaring Twenties, and commented on the extravagances of American life prior to the 1929 stock market crash and the onset of the Great Depression.¹⁴ The significance of *The Great Gatsby* as an intertext is alluded to on a number of occasions throughout the novel, most directly through Solanka's own musings about the consequences of failure in the postmodern world, and how one should not "contemplate what lay beyond failure while one was still trying to succeed. [For] [a]fter all, Jay Gatsby, the highest bouncer of them all, failed too in the end, but lived out, before he crashed, that brilliant, brittle, gold-hatted, exemplary American life" (Rushdie, 2002:82). The ending of *Fury* also speaks directly to the nature of urban life, and most particularly, of American life at the end of what has commonly been labelled "the American Century". The correlation between the idea that the twentieth century saw the rise of American cultural imperialism, epitomised through a series of monolithic urban constructions, particularly in New York, and the fact that the twentieth century was the most violent to date, is too obvious to ignore, specifically within a text like *Fury*. Thus, while *Fury* is not the first of Rushdie's works to feature allusions of the apocalypse,¹⁵ we find these allusions to be at their most explicit in this novel, especially in retrospect, in terms of what happened to two of those 'monoliths' in New York City a little more than a year after the events of this novel, and a few weeks after *Fury* was published in the US. In this light, the inevitable Fall signalled by the novel's final words, shifted from the

¹⁴ The epigraphical poem reads:

Then wear the gold hat, if that will move her;
If you can bounce high, bounce for her too,
Till she cry 'Lover, gold-hatted, high-bouncing lover,
I must have you!'

¹⁵ From the postcolonial violence of *Midnight's Children*, to the pseudo-religious satire of *The Satanic Verses*, and the reconfiguration of the Ovidian myth of transcendence in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, many of Rushdie's works have included allusions of doom and millennial excess. See also Gonzalez's account of "The Charm of Catastrophe" (2005) in Rushdie's works.

realm of fiction and apocalyptic prophecy, into the reality of the early twenty-first century, through the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the literal fall of the World Trade Centre towers.

Žižek argues this point (although not in relation to *Fury*, as I have) when he writes that “we can perceive [the towers’] collapse... as the climactic conclusion of the twentieth-century ‘passion for the Real’ [because] the ‘terrorists’ themselves did not do it primarily to provoke real material damage, but *for the spectacular effect of it*” (2002:11, original emphasis). Žižek goes on to qualify this reasoning by stating that the problem with “the twentieth-century ‘passion for the Real’ was not that it was a passion for the Real, but that it was a fake passion whose ruthless pursuit of the real behind appearances was *the ultimate stratagem to avoid confronting the Real*” (24, original emphasis). It is this stratagem that represents the fundamental paradox of ‘the passion for the Real’, for through it, that ‘passion’ is relegated to the pursuit of theatrical spectacle (9). While Žižek’s argument here may not be groundbreaking in and of itself, for Guy Debord and his fellow Situationists explored the relationship between social reality and the spectacle at length,¹⁶ I believe Žižek’s framing of this ‘pursuit of the real in order to avoid the Real’, is a useful tool with which to examine Rushdie’s narrative strategies in *Fury*. We find that this ‘pursuit’ is evident throughout the novel, particularly in relation to the *mise-en-abyme* present in the sagas of Little Brain and The Puppet Kings, as well as in the play of masks that occurs on Lilliput-Blefuscu. Žižek’s primary contribution, however, lies in the contextualisation of the “theatrical spectacle” to the 9/11 terror attacks, which is a point on which I will later expand in chapter three, through my analysis of how DeLillo uses many of the characters in *Falling Man* to highlight the connections between the visual nature of this spectacle and our ability to process its effects on our consciousness.

New York in a Time of Fury

A retrospective analysis of *Fury* in this light allows for additional insights into the “commodity fetishism” and social “alienation” that Gonzalez identifies in Rushdie’s fictionalised New York. Indeed, as discussed in chapter one, these

¹⁶ See Debord’s *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967).

elements are also evident in Baudrillard's commentary on the real-world city, which he describes as

a world completely rotten with wealth, power, senility, indifference, Puritanism and mental hygiene, poverty and waste, technological futility and aimless violence, and yet I cannot help but feel it has about it something of the dawn of the universe. Perhaps because the entire world continues to dream of New York, even while New York dominates and exploits it.

(1994:23)

Once again, this sentiment calls to mind the "national ideological cornerstone" (Rushdie, 2002:184) that is the American Dream. Indeed, this Dream is particularly evident through Solanka's declarations that he had come to America, to New York, "to receive the benison of being Ellis-Islanded, of starting over" (51). Neela also admits she "fell for New York at once, [like] everybody who needed, and found here, a home away from home among other wanderers who needed exactly the same thing: a haven to spread their wings" (157). Taking his lead from countless other critics, both in fiction and journalism, Rushdie's focus is not on how this ideology works, but, rather, on how it fails to live up to its mythic nature. Thus, echoing Baudrillard, he describes New York as a "city of half-truths and echoes that somehow dominates the earth" (2002:44), for "New York in this time of plenty had become the object and the goal of the world's concupiscence and lust" (6). Gonzalez expands on this line of thinking, by arguing that New York thus "holds both the fascination and terror of the ghoul" (2005:179). Rather than experiencing the beneficence of the American Dream, all of Rushdie's primary characters are positioned within a corrupted city "that feasts on the living, swallowing up originality and appropriating it to itself... devouring culture for profit within the logic of late-capitalism" (179). Thus, Solanka's pleas of "Eat me, America, and give me peace" (Rushdie, 2002:44) take on a more sinister connotation, for that peace can seemingly only emerge once his identity has been overwritten or, indeed, unmade, as it is "bathe[d] in amnesia and clothe[d] in [America's] powerful unknowing" (51). Here we find, perhaps, the most explicit connection in *Fury* to the practice of Calvino's first method of escape from the "infernal city", for the fact that Solanka *wants* to lose himself in the urbanity and 'Americanness' of New York, and that Rhinehart, Mila and Neela, to some degree, all *let* this happen, speaks to the nature of life in a postmodern, urban society where your acceptance within it is subject to your level of acquiescence to it.

For Rushdie, the contrasting nature of this “style of life” is perhaps most profoundly experienced on New York’s streets, which he introduces to us by having Solanka stroll “sweatily cheek by jowl among his fellow citizens... [in] a series of ‘exuberant’ parades celebrating the city’s many ethnic, national and sexual subcultures” (2002:6). This celebration is quickly qualified, though, by the fact that these parades sometimes ended in knifings and assaults, usually on women (6). Baudrillard similarly notes that “[t]he American Street... is always turbulent, lively, kinetic and cinematic [and is] where change, whether spurred by technology, racial differences, or the media, assumes virulent forms: its violence is the very violence of the way of life” (1994:18). It is the source of this violence, and its many dramatic manifestations, that preoccupies Rushdie through much of *Fury*, and which leads him to declare that life, itself, is fury. Through its many incarnations,

sexual, Oedipal, political, magical, brutal, fury drives us to our finest heights and or coarsest depths. Out of *furia* comes creation, inspiration, originality, passion, but also violence, pain, pure unafraid destruction... [It] is what we are, what we civilize ourselves to disguise—the terrifying human animal in us, the exalted transcendent, self-destructive, untrammelled lord of creation.

(Rushdie, 2002:30–31)

It is also this *furia* that seemingly drives Solanka and sends him out wandering through the streets of New York, “looking for a way in, telling himself that the great World-City could heal him, a city child, if he could only find the gateway to its magic, invisible, hybrid heart” (2002:86). Indeed, just like Auster’s protagonist in *City of Glass*, the first book in *The New York Trilogy*, Solanka hoped that “[e]ach time he took a walk, he [would feel] as though he were leaving himself behind, and by giving himself up to the movement of the streets, by reducing himself to a seeing eye, he [would be] able to escape the obligation to think... [which would] more than anything else, [bring] him a measure of peace, a salutary emptiness within” (2004:4). In this way, Solanka craves to become a *flâneur*-type figure. He hopes to lose himself in the city, and in his preoccupation with the lives of others, because he liked the “sense of being crowded out by other people’s stories, of walking like a phantom through a city that was in the middle of a story which didn’t need him as a character” (Rushdie, 2002:89). Thus, through all of his city-wide ramblings during the first few chapters, Solanka keenly observes his surroundings, commenting both

on the nature of the city's architecture as well as on the various people whom he encounters.

What Solanka soon discovers, though, is that

New York [quickly] faded into the background; or, rather, everything that happened to him in the city—every random encounter, every newspaper he opened, every thought, every feeling, every dream—fed his imagination, as though prefabricated to fit into the structure he had already devised. Real life had started obeying the dictates of fiction, providing precisely the raw material he needed to transmute through the alchemy of his reborn art.

(Rushdie, 2002:170)

This experience is similar to Baudelaire's conception of the *flâneur* as the poet whose wandering provides the background for his active engagement in the creative process.¹⁷ What is different in Solanka's case, though, is that his subsequent creation, *The Puppet Kings*, does not provide him with any level of comfort because, just like *Little Brain*, it becomes *too* real, and his life really does start obeying the dictates of fiction simply because he had based all of the characters in *The Puppet Kings* on people in his own life. Solanka became "intoxicated for hours on end by the encounters between 'real' and 'real', 'real' and 'double', 'double' and 'double'... [finding] himself inhabiting a world he greatly preferred to the one outside his window" (187). Thus, he can never find the peace he is looking for, because he sees New York, and America, as failing him. Instead of providing a refuge from the trauma of his past, the corrupted city provides yet another platform on which his past may manifest itself, and thus his 'escape' to New York proves futile, because "[o]utside, in America, everything was too bright, too loud, too strange" (135). And so, "[t]he Furies hovered over Malik Solanka, over New York and America, and shrieked... [and] in the streets below, the traffic, human and inhuman, screamed back its enraged assent" (184).

The further into the novel we read, though, the clearer it becomes that Solanka is only failing himself, in this regard, and this is made explicit through his inability, and perhaps his unwillingness, to blend into New York's cityscape. Instead of the "gold-hatted figure" that leads the "exemplary American life", as found within *The Great Gatsby*, Solanka's "old-world, dandyish, cane-twirling figure... [perfunctorily dressed] in a straw Panama hat and cream linen suit" (4), cements him as someone

¹⁷ See Benjamin's *Charles Baudelaire: a Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (1983).

‘un-American’, and thus as fundamentally ‘other’. Even his British accent, so often commented on, especially by Mila, who is, herself, so aware of her own attempts to fit into the American urban lifestyle, positions him outside of New York’s frame of reference, and as someone who thus brings to bear another, often opposing, world-view.

Solanka’s behaviour also often sets him apart from the crowd, because he cannot overcome that “simmering disconnected anger [that] continued to seep and flow deep within him, threatening to rise up without warning in a mighty volcanic burst. As if it were its own master, as if he were merely the receptacle, the host, and it, the fury, were the sentient, controlling being” (2002:128). Indeed, Solanka seems to be out of control for most of the novel, often unaware of his own actions, and this leads him to feel an increasing sense of despair about his own life. It is during one of these self-deprecating moments that our doubts about the reliability of Solanka as narrator seem to solidify. For while Solanka is contemplating how his inferior knowledge about the workings of the contemporary world made of him a fool, “a drone, or a worker ant... [one of] the faceless ones doomed to break their bodies on society’s wheel while knowledge exercised power over them from on high” (45), he is also, unconsciously, shouting out obscenities. Even after being told what he was doing and having to leave the café in which he was sitting at the time, he still doesn’t remember doing it, or at least refuses to acknowledge it, merely stating that there “was no explanation for the [waitress’s] extraordinary speech” (46). These seeming lapses in self-awareness add fuel to our suspicions, and indeed, Solanka’s own suspicions, that he may very well be The Concrete Killer, who stalks the streets of New York at night, murdering sorority girls. This fear is solidified through a newspaper headline Solanka later sees in Rhinehart’s apartment, which reads “CONCRETE KILLER STRIKES AGAIN. And below, in smaller type: *Who Was the Man in the Panama Hat?*” (63). Rushdie doesn’t keep us in suspense for very long, though, for the unusual sightings of the Panama-hatted man are soon discredited by the police and this is dutifully broadcast to the public, once again through the newspapers, “that clearly implied that the suspect boyfriends [of the three murdered women] were thought to have cooked up the mysterious stalker between them” (89). The irony here is that Solanka’s unique appearance has become mythologised

within the cityscape, all but erasing his own presence in the city, and in a minor way, turning him into that “phantom” he had so longed to become.

Fury and Tragedy in a Postmodern Cityscape

The relevance of these serial murders does not end with Solanka, though. Loosely based on the ‘Son of Sam’ murders that took place in New York in the summer of 1977, they also represent the apotheosis of postmodern urban life, as theorised by Simmel, in which the regard for humanity is replaced with an increasing indifference. The three murdered women are all members of New York’s elite, “all three were beautiful... blonde and formidably accomplished” (72), but ultimately, all are turned into trophies, living dolls, by the high-flying society in which they lived. Nonsensically renamed “Sky”, “Ren” and “Bindy”, these women represented nothing more than property to their equally dubiously nicknamed boyfriends, “Horse”, “Club” and “Stash”, who “react to the three deaths exactly as if some coveted medallions, some golden bowls, or silver cups had been stolen from their clubhouse plinths” (72). Sky, Ren and Bindy were “so thoroughly programmed for action, so perfectly groomed and wardrobed, that there was no room left in them for messy humanity... [Thus these women] represented the final step in the transformation of the cultural history of the doll [by] conspir[ing] in their own dehumanization” (74). This level of dehumanisation is present throughout *Fury*, within Solanka’s (and Rushdie’s) preoccupation with the essence of creation, the dominance of simulacra, and the abandonment of any call to authenticity, which sees this leitmotif become “a consensual tragedy... [in which] postmodern subjects are shown to be sternal prisoners of the fake, never able to transcend the nausea of the replica” (Gonzalez, 2005:192). Indeed, the prison to which Gonzalez is referring is none other than Žižek’s continual and ruthless pursuit of a semblance of reality in order to avoid the Real itself.

The “consensual tragedy” is also evident through the novel’s other three main characters, for as I indicated earlier, each of their stories provides a different example of Calvino’s first method of escape from the “infernal city. Jack Rhinehart, whose name alludes to the eponymous shapeshifting figure in Ellison’s *Invisible Man* (1952), is shown through Solanka’s narration to be severely disillusioned with the

urban world in which he finds himself. Rhinehart's abandonment of his life as a war correspondent for a position as a celebrity-gossip journalist, and his obsessive compulsion to seduce wealthy white women, are merely the symptoms of a larger and more profound identity crisis. For "[b]ehind the infinite layers of Rhinehart's cool was this ignoble fact: he had been seduced, and his desire to be accepted into the white man's club was the dark secret... from which [his] anger grew" (Rushdie, 2002:58). That fury is seemingly embedded within Rhinehart's character and forcibly shifts his perceptions on the nature of human life. In conversation with Solanka, Rhinehart admits that "[n]ow that I'm writing about this billionaire in a coma or those moneyed kids who iced their parents... I'm seeing more of the truth of things than I did in fucking Desert Storm or some Sniper's Alley doorway in Sarajevo, and believe me, it's just as easy, even easier, to step on a fucking landmine and get yourself blown to bits" (56). The irony of this admission lies in Rhinehart's collusion with "Horse", "Stash" and "Club" in the murders of the three young women. Rhinehart's acceptance of Calvino's 'inferno' is thus centred on his attempts to become a part of it himself, for he is so desperate to prove that he is not just a "house nigger" (57), to be told "*You made it man. You're in*" (203), that he goes along with their murderous plans, ultimately unaware of the "truth of things", and thus oblivious to his fate: his death at their hands and their attempt to frame him for the murders.

We can plot a similar trajectory for Mila Milo. Her status as an immigrant from Central Europe mirrors that of Solanka, but unlike him, who could never wholly blend into the cityscape, Mila submerges herself in the urban world of commodity fetishism, becoming, as Gonzalez argues, "a postmodern vampire" (2005:178), who was so "sure of her power, confident of her turf and posse, fearing nothing" (Rushdie, 2002:4). Indeed, Mila's intrinsic connection to the city is made obvious early on, through the epithetical transference of her "piercing green eyes" (41) to the city itself (44). What is interesting, though, is that Mila's subjective power begins to change once she enters her sordid relationship with Solanka, and she becomes increasingly doll-like in her mannerisms and appearance. Signalled through the initial description of her "spiky strawberry-blonde hair [that] stuck out clown-fashion from under her... baseball cap" (4), Mila's transformation into Little Brain,

her favourite childhood doll, is heralded through her realisation that Solanka is, in fact, Little Brain's creator. For it is then that both Mila and Solanka embark on a journey into the world of simulation, where they both became merely simulacra for the real objects of their respective desires: Solanka's own fictional creation, Little Brain, and Mila's deceased father. Mila's justification that "[e]verybody needs a doll to play with" (131), once again reinforces the dominance of this "nausea of the replica". In yet another intertextual nod, this time to Nabokov's *Lolita* (1959), Solanka soon realises that this roleplay is not simply an echo, a reprise of the seduction of her own father, for Solanka, was "by no means the first" of her victims (Rushdie, 2002:133). In this, Mila acquires a different kind of power, as Solanka begins to think of her as the "spider-sorceress... now caught in her own necrophiliac web, dependent on men like [him] to raise her lover very, very slowly from the dead" (133). What is apparent is that each of these 'versions' of Mila – vampire, doll, spider-queen – are merely simulacra in themselves, for they are nothing more than the masks she chooses to hide behind, in her attempts to come to terms with her traumatic, incestuous past, masks that were born out of her immersion into the postmodern urban world. Indeed, Mila later lambastes Solanka for taking them too seriously, for, to her, they were nothing more than play, "[s]erious play, dangerous play, maybe, but play" (173).

Neela Mahendra's image also becomes a matter of contention, and indeed, another example of "serious play" in the novel. We are told that, while in New York, Neela's beauty had quite a profound affect on those around her, and she could not walk down the street without men repeatedly falling over themselves or being brought to tears by her presence. Just as Solanka fails to become a part of the cityscape, so too does Neela's appearance affect her ability to function within the city. As a consequence, her relationship with New York is questioned, for even though she admits that the city had provided her with some means of escape from traumatic encounters with her "boozy father" (157), "her roots pulled at her, and she suffered badly from what she called 'the guilt of relief'" (157). She had escaped her father by obtaining a scholarship to study in New York, but her mother and her sister had not, and so she still "remained passionately attached" to her family and "to her community's cause" (157). This passion is one of the elements which

Solanka finds so enticing about Neela (63), for while he had moved to New York to escape a past he sought to forget, Neela had used her time in the city to prepare for a return to her past, becoming actively involved in political demonstrations held in New York in support of her fellow Indo-Lilliputians. Indeed, New York's role as world-city is once again emphasised through these demonstrations. Significantly though, the protests ultimately fail because they degenerate into violence, which Solanka takes as "evidence here in New York City of the force of a gathering fury on the far side of the world: a group fury, born of long injustice, beside which his own unpredictable temper was a thing of pathetic insignificance" (193). This gathering fury reaches its climax in Lilliput-Blefuscu, outside of the city, for New York had merely been a staging ground for its dramatic manifestation. Similarly, the climax of *Fury* is reached far from the constructs of the cityscape to which all of the novel's energy has thus far been confined. For it is on Lilliput-Blefuscu that Neela's image is fundamentally transformed; her role as the inspiration for Solanka's primary 'puppet queen' forces her to substitute her natural beauty for its own imitation, as she hides behind a mask of herself in order to fit in. Her sacrificial death toward the end of the novel thus signals the death of that "serious play", for "not even [her] beauty could affect the trajectory of the mortars" (254–255) that were aimed at the Parliament building in which she stayed behind to ensure the safety of Solanka and the other hostages.

Thus, through all of the intertextuality, the apocalyptic allusions and the calls to pastiche and *mise-en-abyme*, we find that Rushdie is questioning the interplay between the real and the imagined, and indeed, asking whether it can be called 'play' at all. For its effects are realised, quite dramatically, through the Rushdie–Solanka–Kronos parallel, and the ability for a work of fiction, whether that be the saga of *The Puppet Kings*, or this novel as a whole, to comment both on the nature of the real world, as well as becoming a heterotopia in which that world can be contested. Through the experiences of the four main characters, Rushdie provides insight into the relationships established between an individual and the urban environment which they inhabit. We find this in Solanka's inability to achieve the escape from his past he so desired, through Rhinehart's inability to distinguish between affection and affectation, in the guises that Mila adopts in her attempts to

avoid her own crisis of identity, and in Neela's false hopes that the politicisation of her life in New York would lead to the fulfilment of her goals, and the salvation of her life outside the city. Therefore, in retrospect, *Fury* offers a unique perspective on urban life *within* a moment of transition between the violence of the twentieth century and the violence of the twenty-first, where the latter was initiated dramatically through the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. In the next chapter, through my analysis of the aftermath of these attacks, I will explore how far this idea of transition really extends, particularly through the correlation of the imagined New York within *Fury* to that imagining presented in DeLillo's *Falling Man*.

University Of Cape Town

Chapter Three

- The Art of Falling -

Also in Raissa, city of sadness, there runs an invisible thread that binds one living being to another for a moment, then unravels, then is stretched again between moving points as it draws new and rapid patterns so that at every second the unhappy city contains a happy city unaware of its own existence.

(Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, 1974)

The figure of 9/11 is not a place (although New York City plays that role in the national imaginary), nor yet even a time, since what is missing is the designation of the year, 2001. It will repeat itself every year, and it will remain an open designation... [that] at one moment... will be a sign of remembering the dead, at another the mandate for military adventurism, at yet another, an architectural and civic opportunity.

(David Simpson, *9/11: The Culture of Commemoration*, 2006)

The 11th of September 2001 is a date that few people would fail to recognise as being a significant turning point in recent world history. The order of events that day have become common knowledge; many people around the world watched, in real-time, as the second hijacked airliner crashed into the south tower of New York City's World Trade Centre (WTC), only minutes after the first plane had struck the WTC's north tower. Less than two hours later, both towers had collapsed in a pall of ash and debris, killing close to 3 000 people and injuring thousands more in the destruction, leaving New York, America and the world, in a state of shock. Indeed, as Max Page writes, "[t]here were two phrases spoken over and over again on September 11... and in the weeks and months following: 'It was unimaginable' and, in an apparent contradiction, 'It was just like a movie'" (2005:75). This contradiction arises from the fact that "[t]he sight of the twin towers falling was... both utterly incomprehensible [in relation to] daily experience... and, at the same time, wholly recognizable to our well-trained popular-culture imaginations" (Page, 2005:75). The dedicated global media coverage given to the attacks increased this cinematic appeal, with the events being replayed again and again as coverage of the first crash, and different camera angles of the second plane and collapsing towers, came to light.¹⁸

¹⁸ See the collection of essays in *The Spectacle of the Real*, edited by Geoff King, for a detailed account of how the repetitive media coverage of the attacks in the subsequent days and weeks factored into

One of the reasons why the line between the reality and the mediated reality of this event has become so blurred is because of what the towers themselves represent within either of those realities. Fran Tonkiss argues that urban forms, such as buildings and monuments, “are made not only out of materials and things, but out of meanings, language and symbols. It can be relatively easy to knock down a building, but it is much harder to demolish a space which is composed around memory, experience or imagination” (2005:3). Indeed, in his work *The Spirit of Terrorism* (2003), Jean Baudrillard proposes that “[e]ven in [the towers’] pulverized state, they have left behind an intense awareness of their presence. No one who knew them can cease imagining them and the imprint they made on the skyline from all points of the city. Their end in material space has borne them off into a definitive imaginary space” (48). Similarly, in his essay, “Lost and Found”, published in *The New York Times* in November 2001, Colson Whitehead writes, “[t]he twin towers still stand because we saw them, moved in and out of their long shadows... They are a part of the city we carry around” (26). Drawing on the phenomenology of Heidegger¹⁹ and Lefebvre, Tonkiss, Baudrillard and Whitehead thus note an important element in the conceptualisation of city-space, that is, the dialectic between the functionality of a particular urban form and its embeddedness within lived urban experience. Much has been written about the events of 9/11 in the eight years since with regard to the historical, political, economic and social ramifications of the attacks themselves.²⁰ What interests me most, however, is Baudrillard’s conceptualisation of an imaginary space that has been generated in the lived urban experience as a result of the destruction of the WTC towers. The aim of this chapter is to extend my earlier argument on the functionality of fictional narrative as a form of heterotopia, using Baudrillard’s argument as a lens. For I believe the imaginary space the towers now occupy has functioned as the genesis of

the psychological trauma generated by the attacks themselves.

¹⁹ Particularly Heidegger’s “Building, Dwelling, Thinking” (1971), in which he proposes that “[w]e do not represent things merely in our mind... so that only mental representations of distant things run through our minds and heads as substitutes for the things... Rather, we always go through spaces in such way that we already experience them by staying constantly with near and remote locations and things” (1997:106-107).

²⁰ Major contributions in this regard include the three Verso publications by Žižek, Virilio and Baudrillard I discussed in chapter one, as well as Noam Chomsky’s *9-11* (2001), and David Simpson’s *9/11: the Culture of Commemoration* (2006). While Chomsky offered an insightful account of the political repercussions of the attacks, it is Simpson who most succinctly captures how the events of 9/11 generated a culture centred on memory and memorialisation and, as such, I draw on his work on a number of occasions in this chapter.

a number of heterotopias in the form of works of fiction, one of which is Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* (2007).

I take as my starting point Ann Keniston and Jeanne Follansbee Quinn's suggestion in their examination of *Literature After 9/11*, that

while the initial experience of 9/11 seemed unprecedented and cataclysmic, the experience of incommensurability generated a culture-wide need for explanatory narratives, not simply as a means for countering the trauma, but as a means for refusing incommensurability... characterized by the *transition* from narratives of rupture to narratives of continuity.

(2008:3, original emphasis)

Keniston and Quinn identify DeLillo's *Falling Man* as one of the latter and offer several useful observations about the state of literature after 9/11, notably an emphasis on the very nature of this 'afterwardness.' In a discussion of Art Spiegelman's provocative graphic novel, *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2004), which recounts various experiences of the attacks in a unique way akin to its very distinctive medium, Keniston and Quinn note how Spiegelman's interrogation of the 'facts' of the event can similarly be traced through much 9/11 literature. Works of this nature continually insist "on the space between the real and the imagined, between the image and the trope, and between the private realm of memory and the public realm of history... impel[ling] us to see these spaces even as it forces them together" (2008:2).²¹ This is something that is felt very strongly in *Falling Man*, particularly through DeLillo's narrative strategy of focusing on how the event of 9/11 both spatially and temporally disrupted the lives of the novel's characters. In this chapter I will analyse the ways in which DeLillo frames the narrative of *Falling Man* by using the imaginary space of the towers to highlight how other urban spaces, such as the street, the home and the park, take on a new significance, both within the cityscape of New York and in the lives of the novel's characters. I will also examine how these spaces, and the activities conducted within them, function as catalysts in dealing with the various levels of trauma the novel's characters experience as a result of the attacks.

²¹ Other works of fiction on this subject include Frederic Beigbeder's *Windows on the World* (2003), Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (2005), Jay McInerney's *The Good Life* (2006), John Updike's *Terrorist* (2006) and Martin Amis's *The Second Plane* (2008), many of which are discussed at length in *Literature after 9/11*.

Falling Man as Storytelling

The origins of *Falling Man* are twofold. Firstly, the novel's title, and indeed, one of the novel's characters, draw their inspiration from a photograph of one of the 'jumpers' from the north tower, taken on the day by Richard Drew, a photojournalist with Associated Press. With its stark framing and the jumper's unique pose, it is perhaps the most famous (or infamous) photograph to emerge from that day, and it created a wave of controversy, particularly in relation to the fact that it drew attention away from other, more 'heroic' deaths, and focused it on the act of suicidal jumping, an act repeated many times over by people who found themselves trapped in the towers. The photograph took its name, "The Falling Man", from an article by Tom Junod, published in the September 2003 issue of *Esquire*, in which he explores the tragedy behind the act of jumping itself, and attempts to trace the identity of the man in Drew's photograph.²² The connections between DeLillo's text, this photograph and Junod's article, lie in the character of David Janiak, a performance artist who is dubbed 'Falling Man' as a result of the provocative nature of his performance pieces, in which he attaches himself to a rudimentary harness and jumps off buildings and other structures all over New York, ending in a freeze-frame pose that replicates that of "The Falling Man" photograph. I will address the significance of this character's inclusion in the narrative, as well as the effect his performances have on one of the main characters, later in this chapter.

Secondly, the premise behind *Falling Man*'s narrative can be traced to a compelling article DeLillo wrote for *Harper's* magazine, later published in the UK's *Guardian* newspaper in December 2001, in which he addresses the political and social implications of the attacks. In this essay, entitled "In the ruins of the future", in which DeLillo contemplates the

²² In his article, Junod hauntingly describes how the man in Drew's photograph seems to "depart... from this earth like an arrow... appear[ing] comfortable in the grip of unimaginable motion.... His arms are by his side, only slightly outriggered. His left leg is bent at the knee, almost casually.... The man in the picture... is perfectly vertical, and so is in accord with the lines of the buildings behind him. He splits them, bisects them: Everything to the left of him in the picture is the North Tower; everything to the right, the South. Though oblivious to the geometric balance he has achieved, he is the essential element in the creation of a new flag, a banner composed entirely of steel bars shining in the sun" (2009, online).

100,000 stories crisscrossing New York, Washington, and the world. Where we were, who we know, what we've seen or heard. There are the doctors' appointments that saved lives, the cellphones that were used to report the hijackings. Stories generating others... take us beyond the hard numbers of dead and missing and give us a glimpse of elevated being.

(2001, online)

Marco Abel proposes that through this essay, DeLillo "invites readers to shape and reshape reality into different impressions of equal value, which combine in a speculative series: this happened and this and this... Thus, the essay attempts rhetorically to position readers so that they become capable of seeing that which cannot be perceived in the event's endless televised images" (2003:1240). Indeed, it seems that *Falling Man* is the culmination of what DeLillo began in "In the Ruins of the Future", because these speculative glimpses proved to be the inspiration for many of the stories DeLillo tells in his later novel. Abel goes on to argue that, in his essay, DeLillo "tries rhetorically to induce in the reader a certain kind of responsibility through intensifying [the essay's] narrative rhythm... alternat[ing] between what appears to be a dialectical movement of impressionistic close-ups of the event and distanced, intellectual analyses of what happened – but without ever arriving at a resolution of this movement" (1241). This is arguably DeLillo's aim within *Falling Man* as well, for the novel's narrative continually shifts between characters and perspectives, reflected in its numerous short sentences and paragraphs, the frequently stilted dialogue and the many repetitive rhetorical questions that are scattered throughout the text.

This method of storytelling, however, has received a number of mixed reviews. I will not explore the more overtly positive of these because, as is so often the case, many have become promotional tools rather than critical accounts. Instead, I will focus on four pieces that I believe perceptively detail this novel's potential flaws. Firstly, Adam Mars-Jones, reviewing *Falling Man* for *The Observer*, finds it "hard to tell whether this is a story of disintegration or its opposite, which isn't necessarily a problem... [but] *Falling Man* gives the... impression of having no kernel inside its various shells. The feeling of being decentred, peripheral to oneself, is clearly appropriate to a narrative of aftermath, but turns out to be an abiding, almost defining, characteristic of [this] book" (2007, online). Upon reading Mars-Jones' critique, I was struck by how closely it paralleled Slavoj Žižek's claim that "we

should be able to discern, in what we experience as fiction, the hard kernel of the Real, which we are able to sustain only if we fictionalize it” (2002:19), a claim that emerged from Žižek’s 9/11 exegesis, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*, and which evaluates the subtext of a fictional work in terms of its prescience, that is, its relationship to what Žižek labels as the Real, the totalising experience of reality that many people go to lengths to avoid.²³ Thus, in noting the decentred nature of *Falling Man*, Mars-Jones is questioning the detached narrative stance that pervades the novel.

This is something with which James Wood, once again writing for *New Republic*, similarly finds fault. For Wood, DeLillo’s representation of that “deep pause... not just... before the impact, but the pause after it, when everything changed, when time stopped” (2007, online), translates into a novel that falls into a deep pause itself, “seem[ing] to drift in a stunned, meaningless void” (2007, online). Wood goes on to criticise the arrangement of stories that DeLillo presents, arguing that this novel is “not a synthesis or an argument or even, really, a sustained narrative, but a... suggestive arrangement of symbolically productive elements” (2007, online). Wood’s reservations also echo those of Michiko Kakutani of *The New York Times*, who declares that

[i]nstead of capturing the impact of 9/11 on the country or New York or a spectrum of survivors or even a couple of interesting individuals, instead of illuminating the zeitgeist in which 9/11 occurred or the shell-shocked world it left in its wake, Mr. DeLillo leaves us with two paltry images: one of a performance artist re-enacting the fall of bodies from the burning World Trade Center, and one of a self-absorbed man, who came through the fire and ash of that day and decided to spend his foreseeable future playing stupid card games in the Nevada desert.

(2007, online)

Finally, the relevance of the novel’s two central images, which Kakutani so unsympathetically describes, is also of concern for Tom Junod, and quite appropriately so, considering the implicit connections between DeLillo and Junod’s work. Reviewing DeLillo’s novel for *Esquire*, Junod explains how *Falling Man* failed to live up to his expectations, because what he asked of it was “not that it be inventive, but that it be commensurate - commensurate to all the falling men, and the falling women, and their agony... And it’s not. It’s a portrait of grief, to be sure, but it puts grief in the air, as a cultural atmospheric, without giving us anything to

²³ cf. My discussion of Žižek’s definition of this experience in chapter one.

mourn” (2007, online). Junod goes on to discuss the prescient nature of DeLillo’s pre-9/11 works,²⁴ particularly *Mao II* and *Underworld*, ending his review by drawing on the sense of authenticity that DeLillo’s previous works lend to *Falling Man*, while simultaneously questioning whether DeLillo produced *Falling Man* simply because its narrative was already established by his repertoire. To this end, Junod writes that DeLillo “gets it right [in this novel] because he already got it right, and yet when one of the characters in *Falling Man* says, ‘Ask yourself: what comes after America?’, the book winds up answering its own terminal question. What comes after America is another Don DeLillo novel, another beautiful artifact made exquisitely out of ash” (2007, online).

Yet while Mars-Jones, Wood, Kakutani and Junod may feel that *Falling Man* offers little of substance beyond a selection of “paltry” and “peripheral” images, their interpretations, arguably, underestimate what DeLillo is trying to achieve, which is to fill the imaginary space of the towers with both memory *and* history, through focusing on the lived experiences of his characters. The central story of *Falling Man* begins with our introduction to the protagonist, Keith Neudecker, staggering out of the WTC’s north tower in which he worked, and into “a world, a time and space of falling ash and near night” (DeLillo, 2008:3). We follow Keith as he slowly moves north, bearing witness, as he does, to the destruction: “a car half-buried in the debris, windows smashed and noises coming out, radio voices scratching at the wreckage... people running past holding towels to their faces or jackets over their heads... shoes discarded in the street, handbags and laptops, a man seated on the sidewalk coughing up blood” (3–4). In this form of cataloguing we find a direct parallel between *Falling Man* and DeLillo’s earlier essay, which continues through the first chapter, and beyond, as Keith sees the destruction that has been wrought, but is unable to process it, because “[t]hings inside were distant and still, where he was supposed to be. It happened everywhere around him” (3). This sense of detachment plays into the description of this event as being ‘unreal’ precisely because “it is too real, a phenomenon so unaccountable and yet so bound to the power of objective fact that we can’t tilt it to the slant of our perceptions” (DeLillo,

²⁴ As do a number of the essays within *Literature After 9/11*, in particular, Michael Rothberg’s “Seeing terror, feeling art”, which uses *Mao II* as a frame of reference for an analysis of DeLillo’s narrative strategy within “In the ruins of the future”.

2001, online). Žižek argues that the ‘unreality’ of the late-capitalist postmodern society stems from the ‘passion for the Real’, which “culminates in the thrill of the Real as the ultimate ‘effect’, sought after from digitalized special effects [to] reality TV” (2002:12). Extending this argument to the 9/11 attacks themselves, he states that this is precisely what the “compelling image of the collapse of the WTC was: an image: a semblance, an ‘effect’, which, at the same time, delivered ‘the thing in itself’” (19). Žižek’s argument here is similar to Baudrillard’s dissimulation of the sign, as discussed in chapter two, for ‘the thing in itself’ in this context, that is, the destruction of the Towers, lost its sense of realism because it felt like a mere repetition of what had been witnessed before, particularly in effects-laden disaster films. Bringing this back to *Falling Man*, we find that Keith’s spatial perceptions become unreliable in the novel because he, too, has lost his ability to distinguish between ‘the reality’ and ‘the semblance’, which leaves him unable to correlate his current location with any of his known spatial practices or representations. So Keith “began to see things, somehow, differently. Things did not seem charged in the usual ways... there was something critically missing from the things around him. They were unfinished, whatever that means. They were unseen, whatever that means” (DeLillo, 2008:3; 5).

The shift that occurs in Keith’s spatial perceptions is matched by an equal preoccupation with time. The blurb on the back of both the hardcover and paperback editions of *Falling Man* begins with the line, “There is September 11 and then there are the days after, and finally the years”. This outlook forms the primary thread of the narrative, as each of the characters seem to struggle with the idea of “What’s next?”, a struggle akin to Freud’s concept of *Nachträglichkeit*, which perhaps can best be described as a preoccupation with this sense of ‘after’, where the memory of an event is given precedence over the event itself, particularly in relation to the experience of trauma.²⁵ This sense of what comes after becomes a prominent concern for Lianne, Keith’s estranged wife, and the second of only three characters in the novel from whose perspective DeLillo narrates. Lianne even poses the question to her mother a few days after September 11, to which her mother replies, “Nothing is next. There is no next. This was next. Eight years ago they planted a

²⁵ See Freud’s *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1895) for a detailed explanation of this concept.

bomb in one of the towers. Nobody said what's next. This was next. The time to be afraid is when there's no reason to be afraid. Too late now" (2008:10). Here, DeLillo turns *Nachträglichkeit* into fatalism, which leads to Wood's earlier criticism, for Wood believes sentences and passages like this "are given rather too much credence" within DeLillo's narrative (2007, online). Their prevalence is certainly noticeable, but rather than relegating *Falling Man's* narrative to that "meaningless void", I believe they provide insight into DeLillo's own state of mind, perhaps because this fatalism was a concern for DeLillo as well. Acknowledging the "100 000 stories" that emerged out of the chaos and trauma of 9/11 is necessary, but DeLillo argues that, as a writer, he felt he needed to do more. He needed to "understand what this day has done to us... We seem pressed for time, all of us. Time is scarcer now. There is a sense of compression, plans made hurriedly, time forced and distorted. But language is inseparable from the world that provokes it [and so] the writer begins in the towers, trying to imagine the moment, desperately" (2001, online). Indeed, it is this sense of urgency that Keniston and Quinn identify as a preoccupation inherent within all 9/11 literature precisely for the reasons DeLillo lists.

Imagining one survivor's story inevitably led DeLillo to imagining other connected stories, other glimpses into lives that had been affected by the events of that day. One of these is Keith and Lianne's seven-year-old son, Justin, who refuses to acknowledge that the towers had actually collapsed, and so, he continually searches the skies with his friends, "looking for more planes...Waiting for it to happen again" (DeLillo, 2008:72). We are also introduced to Nina, Lianne's ageing mother, whose turbulent relationship with Martin, a European art dealer and former German terrorist, becomes a focal point for Lianne during the narrative. We read about Florence Givens, a survivor of the north tower with whom Keith becomes sexually involved, as well as Terry Cheng, Keith's former 'poker-buddy', who, in a similar manner to Keith, detaches himself from responsibility by immersing himself in the world of gambling. Finally, there is Hammad, one of the Islamic terrorists who hijacked the first plane, and from whose perspective DeLillo chooses to frame the terrorist activities that led to the attacks, positioning these narrative segments as interludes between the novel's three parts. These sections extend the glimpses that

DeLillo offers in this novel, further contextualising the attack. They also provide him with an appropriate way to end the novel as he began it by using formal symmetry to contrast the chaos of reality. In fact, the transition from Hammad in the hijacked plane, to Keith in the tower in the novel's final pages, is its *tour de force*, for this succinctly illustrates the connectedness of the stories DeLillo is telling here, and this is something on which I will expand later in this chapter. It is important to recognise that each of these characters, and their subsequent stories, form a part of the grand narrative of 9/11, for even though all of these characters are fictional constructs, the heterotopian nature of this fictional world ascribes to them a frame of reference outside of fiction to which we, as readers, can relate. In this way they too become a "part of the story that is left to us... to set against the massive spectacle that continues to seem unmanageable, too powerful a thing to set into our frame of practised response" (DeLillo, 2001, online).

Falling Man's deliberate narrative parallels are thus relevant in relation to one another only in so far as we remember that each is connected by a single event, which "[i]n its desertion of every basis for comparison... asserts its singularity" (DeLillo, 2001, online). Rather than decentring the narrative, these connections add depth to it, emphasising the fact that nothing happens in isolation. All of the stories DeLillo tells in *Falling Man* are generated out of the imaginary space the towers now occupy, and their suggestiveness lies in our ability to relate them to their 'real' counterparts, the "100 000 stories" around which DeLillo constructs this narrative. Indeed, while DeLillo's prose could be classified as being 'detached', this is not necessarily a criticism. In a manner similar to Rushdie's construction of *Fury*, *Falling Man's* narrative style reflects the contextual milieu of New York after the attacks, to the extent that the pared down nature of the text seems to be in direct correlation to the character's experience of the attacks themselves. This is represented most acutely in the narrative through the character of Justin, who reverts to monosyllabic speech in the weeks after September 11. Beginning as a class exercise "Designed to teach the children something about the structure of words and the discipline required to frame clear thoughts" (DeLillo, 2008:66), Justin soon develops this act beyond any instructive game. "He was getting better at this, Justin was, barely pausing between words... [T]he practice carried something else now, a

solemn obstinacy, nearly ritualistic” (160). The significance of this need for obsessive ritual, which resonates just as deeply for Keith and Lianne, becomes clear once you read DeLillo’s narrative in light of Trauma Theory.

DeLillo and Trauma Theory

The contextualisation of the events of 9/11 within the lives of the *Falling Man*’s characters, allows us to read this novel in terms of the body of work known as Trauma Theory, which originated with Freud’s psychoanalytical explorations of the human mind and its ability to process sense data (and more specifically through his concept of *Nachträglichkeit*), and which, in the wake of the Holocaust, Vietnam and the Gulf War, has become integral to any examination of the effects of both individual and collective trauma in contemporary society.²⁶ E. Ann Kaplan notes that “[c]entral to the Freudian theory of trauma is a motivated unconscious [through which a] traumatic event may trigger earlier traumatic happenings, already perhaps mingled with fantasy, and shape how the current event is experienced” (2005:32). One of the ways in which this motivated unconscious physically manifests itself is through compulsive, often ritualistic behaviour, most notably the repetition-compulsion, which Freud documented at length in “Remembering, Repeating and Working-through” (1914) and again in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1922).²⁷ In his writings on the Holocaust, Dominick LaCapra applies Freud’s concepts of “acting-out” and “working-through” to the historicity of traumatic events, using them as a means by which one can evaluate how an individual or collective engages with the acts of remembering and processing trauma.²⁸ In a 1998 interview, LaCapra elaborates on the connections between these two processes, arguing that acting-out primarily stems from the tendency in trauma victims

²⁶ In particular, see Cathy Caruth’s *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996).

²⁷ In the former work, Freud introduces the concepts of ‘acting-out’ and ‘working-through’ as two modes by which people deal with trauma. In the latter work, Freud expands on the process of acting-out, linking it to the repetition-compulsion, most famously illustrated through his example of the *Fort-Da* game, in which an eighteen-month-old toddler keeps himself occupied for hours by staging the disappearance and return of a cotton reel. Here Freud suggests that this elaborate game functions as a simulation of the frequent disappearance and return of the toddler’s mother, and is a means by which the toddler can reassert his own mastery over that situation which he is helpless to control, by transferring his control to the game he plays.

²⁸ See LaCapra’s *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (1994), *History and Memory after Auschwitz* (1998) and *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001), for more on this subject.

to relive the past, to exist in the present as if they were still fully in the past, with no distance from it... [T]o relive occurrences, or at least find that those occurrences intrude on their present existence, for example, in flashbacks; or in nightmares; or in words that are compulsively repeated, and that don't seem to have their ordinary meaning, because they're taking on different connotations from another situation, in another place.

(1998, online)

This tendency often results in the development of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) because the trauma victim's unconscious becomes so embattled in the blurring between the past and the present that the repetition of traumatic scenes takes precedence. In contrast to this, LaCapra recognises a "countervailing force", Freud's "working-through", in which "the person tries to gain critical distance on a problem, to be able to distinguish between past, present and future. For the victim, this means his ability to say to himself, 'Yes, that happened to me back then. It was distressing, overwhelming, perhaps I can't entirely disengage myself from it, but I'm existing here and now, and this is different from back then'" (1998, online). LaCapra positions working-through as the more positive of the two modes, akin to a grieving process without the lapse into persistent melancholy, but he nevertheless stresses that the acting-out/working-through dynamic is "not a separation into... different categories, but a distinction between interacting processes" (1998, online), and when viewed in this way, this dialectic may become helpful in identifying the many ways in which trauma can affect an individual or collective. In this light, I believe we can correlate the process of working-through trauma to Calvino's second method of escape from the inferno of the postmodern city, for both require a sense of perceptual distance from the problems at hand, in order for one to be able to recognise a way forward.

In her work on *Trauma Culture*, Kaplan extends LaCapra's dialectic to New York after 9/11, arguing that

[t]he city [itself] seems caught between two processes... namely providing an adequate form of 'witnessing' in the aftermath of the catastrophe, and also finding ways to 'translate' it so that the city can resume its life, and can move on from the trauma. It is hard for the city and its people to move on from related processes of 'acting out', that is remaining within the traumatic event and repeating it endlessly (something similar to Freud's melancholy), to 'working through', the stage of accepting what has happened, mourning many kinds of loss, and providing – not closure or healing (the wound to New York will remain forever) – but a fitting witness, a fitting way to memorialize the catastrophe.

(2005:136)

DeLillo, I believe, felt similarly, for the difficult transition that Kaplan identifies is inherent throughout his narrative. Indeed, the processes of acting-out and working-through become useful tools for recognising how DeLillo has framed his character's experiences. The tendency to act out is perhaps most notable in Keith, who shares Nina's fatalism about there being no 'next'. This becomes one of the driving forces in his life as he struggles to come to terms with "the days after and... the years [plagued by] a thousand heaving dreams, the trapped man, the fixed limbs, the dream of paralysis, the gasping man, the dream of asphyxiation, the dream of helplessness" (DeLillo, 2008:230). As Wood points out, Keith is a "man in freefall" (2007, online), whose perceptions, both spatial and temporal, have been permanently altered by the events of September 11, and it soon becomes apparent that the "heaving dreams" Keith suffers are merely a symptom of his PTSD. What is interesting, though, is that DeLillo never labels Keith's condition as such, and outside of symptoms such as these dreams and the repetition-compulsion he manifests in relation to the physical therapy of his injured right hand, DeLillo refrains from attaching any medical definition to Keith's struggles. Rather, DeLillo focuses on how these symptoms affect Keith's ability to function within societal spaces such as the street, the home, the work place and the recreational space.

From early in the narrative, we are made aware of Keith's increasing detachment from both his surroundings and his family and friends. Emerging from the tower, Keith constantly feels like a man apart, someone who now watches his life from a distance because he cannot seem to focus his mind enough to maintain any sense of agency. This perceptual distance seems to stem from his inability to maintain an emotional distance from the trauma he experienced, and so Keith

began to think into the day, into the minute. It was being here, alone in time, that made this happen, being away from routine stimulus, all the streaming forms of office discourse. Things... seemed clearer to the eye, oddly, in ways he didn't understand... [But] nothing seemed familiar, being here, in a family again, and he felt strange to himself, or always had, but it was different now, because he was watching.

(DeLillo, 2008:65)

This unfamiliarity becomes tangible during Keith's walks through Central Park. On one such occasion, Keith feels out of place among the passing rollerbladers, runners and dog walkers, observing that "[t]he ordinariness [of these activities], so normally unnoticeable, fell upon him oddly, with almost dreamlike affect" (51). Later, Keith

notices a horse and rider heading down the bridle path and cannot help but think that this “was something that belonged to another landscape, something inserted, a conjuring that resembled for the briefest second some half-seen image only half-believed in the seeing, when the witness wonders what has happened to the meaning of things, to tree, street, stone, wind, simple words lost in the falling ash” (103). This loss of meaning becomes a key point of contention for Keith and is reflected in the radical changes he makes in his life during the course of the narrative, one of which is represented by a shift in his material needs. His first and only visit to his own apartment after the attacks forces him to realise that he cannot go back to his former life, and his uncertainty about where this leaves him further exacerbates his sense of detachment. The words he repeats to himself while standing outside his apartment, “in a voice slightly above a whisper... ‘I’m standing here’, and then louder, ‘I’m standing here’” (27), are but an echo of those he had heard from a man standing at the edge of the WTC site. Unlike that earlier man, however, who had uttered these words with incredulity, Keith says them in an attempt to reconnect with the present, an attempt that DeLillo immediately undermines through the narration, asserting that “[i]n the movie version, someone would be in the building, an emotionally damaged woman or homeless man, and there would be dialogue and close-ups” (27). This rather cynical comment once again draws attention to the mediated nature of our reality, a theme to which DeLillo returns on numerous occasions throughout the novel.

Keith’s sense of detachment is further symbolised in the briefcase he carries out of the tower. Given to him by chance on his way down, he holds onto it, carrying it all the way to his wife’s house. A few days later, he notices the briefcase in a closet and realises for the first time that it was not actually his. “He’d seen it, even half placed it in some long-lost distance as an object in his hand... an object pale with ash, but it wasn’t until now that he knew why it was here... It was here because he brought it here” (35). The detached manner in which Keith proceeds to examine the briefcase’s contents is yet another reflection of his emotional regression, and is reminiscent of the qualitative disconnection between object and subject that Simmel, Jameson, Baudrillard and Žižek all identify, in differing contexts, as being prevalent within our late-capitalist, postmodern society. For DeLillo, though, the

briefcase primarily functions as a means by which to introduce another survivor from the north tower, Florence Givens, who had worked one floor below Keith. Their meeting, awkward at first, becomes a moment in which they engage with their shared trauma, and through which both Keith and Florence set up a clear parallel between the processes of acting-out and working-through, and indeed, between Calvino's two methods of escape. In narrating how Florence grapples with the memories of her escape from the tower, how "[s]he went through it slowly, remembering as she spoke, often pausing to look into space, to see things again, the collapsed ceiling and blocked stairwells, the smoke, always, and the fallen wall" (2008:55), DeLillo focuses our attention on the act of recollection, and how it too draws on that sense of imaginary space. Florence's pauses and her seemingly blank stares are merely the ways in which she looks into the imaginary space she has constructed in her mind, a space that contains her individualised experience of the attacks. Indeed, this imaginary space is significant because it provides the opportunity, that is, *the space and the time*, for Florence to work through the trauma she experienced.

DeLillo's narration makes it clear that Keith understands Florence's need here. "She wanted to tell him everything... Maybe she had forgotten he was there, in the tower, or maybe he was the one she needed to tell for precisely that reason. He knew she hadn't talked about this, not so intensely, to anyone else" (55). And this need is one that cannot be easily assuaged, because after finishing her account, Florence begins again, trying "to recall things and faces, moments that might explain something or reveal something" (58). For Keith, though, the simple act of telling his story is not enough, primarily because he feels so detached from it, and so he listens carefully to Florence's account, "noting every detail, trying to find himself in the crowd" (59).²⁹ At one point Florence mentions seeing a maintenance man with a crowbar rush passed her on the stairs, and this triggers Keith's own memory of the same. "Means nothing, he thought. But then it did. Whatever had happened to the man was situated outside of the fact that they'd both seen them, at different points in the march down, but it was important, that he'd been carried in these

²⁹ This can be read as an inversion of the manner in which a *flâneur* attempts to lose himself in a crowd by utilising his anonymity within that space, and this connection, once again, points towards the usefulness of Frisby's redefinition of *flânerie* (discussed in chapter one) in (re)evaluating the links between an urban environment and individual and collective subjectivity.

crossing memories, brought down out of the tower and into this room” (57). Thus, just as the processes of acting-out and working-through are connected, so too are Florence’s need for revelation and Keith’s need for affirmation. Both function on the same intuitive level because both speak to their inherent need to come to terms with the traumatic events they have experienced.

Their respective engagement with these processes leads them to initiate a sexual relationship for precisely the same reasons. By focusing his attention on Florence, Keith once again attempts to establish his connection to the present, but, after a while, he realises that Florence “was not someone to be snatched at, not a denial of some truth he may have come upon in these long strange days and still nights, these after-days... [for] [i]t was what they knew together, in the timeless drift of the long spiral down” (137) that mattered to him the most and it was for this reason alone that he went back to her time and again. Here we find what is arguably a direct correlation between DeLillo and Calvino’s texts, for it is our recognition of Keith’s frustrated attempts to acknowledge “what in the midst of the inferno, [is] not inferno” (i.e. his interaction with Florence) that allows us to sympathise with his predicament, and encourages us to continue reading. What becomes one of the more poignant aspects of the novel, though, is the fact that Keith never achieves that sense of escape from his trauma, but seemingly continues to ‘spiral down’, trapped by his own haunted memories.

One of the more explicit ways in which Keith ‘acts out’ as a result of his failure to ‘work through’, is through the repetition-compulsion he develops in relation to the physical therapy of his injured right hand. In a manner similar to Justin’s monosyllabic speech, the therapy begins as an instructive necessity, which he “found... restorative, four times a day, the wrist extensions, the ulnar deviations” (40). Yet, the therapy becomes just another distraction through which he can forcibly ignore the most pressing issue that is facing him: reconnecting with his family, for he feels that “it was this modest home program, the counting of seconds, the counting of repetitions, the times of day he reserved for the exercises, the ice he applied following each set of exercises... [that] were the true countermeasures to the damage he’d suffered in the tower, in the descending chaos” (DeLillo, 2008:40). The connection between acting-out and working-through is apparent here as well

because Keith's struggle to attain a perceptual distance on his experiences is in constant conflict with his obsessive habitual actions that root him in the past. Indeed, it seems he develops these rituals in an attempt to block out "the chaos, the levitation of ceilings and floors, the voices choking in smoke" (40), by sitting "in deep concentration, working on the hand shapes" (40). Žižek examines the issue of repetition-compulsion at length, posing the question "[i]s not the ultimate aim of his or her compulsive rituals to prevent the 'thing' from happening – this thing being the excess of life itself?" (2002:89).³⁰ Life for Keith after the attacks was, indeed, too excessive, and so, just as in Calvino's first method of escape, he gave himself continually over to this excess by becoming excessive himself, losing himself in the repetitiveness of his exercises. Thus Keith "finds himself drifting into spells of reflection, thinking not in clear units, hard and linked, but only absorbing what comes, drawing things out of time and memory and into some dim space that bears his collected experience" (DeLillo, 2008:66). Keith's gambling soon takes on a similar level of excessiveness, as he begins to travel from poker game to poker game across America and the world, before taking up semi-permanent residence in the casinos of Las Vegas. Here, he recognises that "[h]e was never more himself than in these rooms, with a dealer crying out a vacancy at table seventeen. He was looking at pocket tens, waiting for the turn. These were the times when there was nothing outside, no flash of history or memory that he might unknowingly summon in the routine run of the cards" (225).

The narrative also makes it clear that Lianne suffers from PTSD, although, as with Keith, DeLillo never defines it as such. This is exacerbated by her fear of being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, like her father before her, a diagnosis that spurred her father to commit suicide. Indeed, as the narrative progresses, Lianne develops her own repetition-compulsions. Initially, these are linked to the Alzheimer's counselling group she runs in a local community centre, where she fixates on the stories she asks the Alzheimer's patients to write about their lives and experiences, stories she needs to hear because they are told by "people [who] were the living breath of the thing that killed her father" (62), but also, through the act of listening to these stories, these memories, she can, for a while, forget her own

³⁰ cf. My discussions of Žižek in chapter two, and how he relates this excessiveness to the nature of the Real.

painful experiences. However, the group is only a short-term solution both for her and its members, who inevitably succumb to the disease. Thus, as the narrative progresses through a number of years, Lianne's anxiety increases as she approaches the age at which her father was diagnosed, and her paranoia turns inward as she begins fighting her own body, turning to medicine for answers. Indeed, she becomes something of a hypochondriac, for which she finds relief, in between her numerous doctors' visits, by counting down from 100 in sevens, an act, like Keith's physical therapy, that was initially conducted as part of medical routine, but which, in its repetition, becomes a restorative mantra.

Extending repetition-compulsion to the media representation of 9/11, Kathy Smith argues that "[o]ne of the lasting images of the events of September 11 is the image of the second plane impacting on the second tower, replayed again and again throughout the day and over the days which followed, in a global attempt to admit its possibility and to come to terms with the act" (2005:67). Žižek takes a similar stance by proposing that "[w]hen... our gaze was transfixed by the images of the plane hitting one of the towers, we were all forced to experience the 'compulsion to repeat'... we wanted to see it again and again... and the uncanny satisfaction we got from it was *jouissance* at its purest" (2002:11–12).³¹ In *Falling Man*, DeLillo draws our attention to the localised implications of Smith's "global attempt". On one such occasion, the narration emphasises Lianne's initial hesitance when watching one of these many replays, detailing how "she moved a finger toward the power button on the remote. Then she kept on watching. The second plane coming out of that ice blue sky, this was the footage that entered her body, that seemed to run beneath her skin, the fleeting sprint that carried lives and histories, theirs and hers, everyone's, into some other distance, out beyond the towers" (2008:134). That "other distance" is the imaginary space the towers now occupy in Lianne's mind, which is filled, as it is for Florence and Keith, with her own individualised experiences of the trauma it entails.

³¹ Žižek is once again drawing Lacan here, who used the term '*jouissance*' to describe the extension of the 'orgasm' beyond Freud's Pleasure Principle, where it represents the transition from pleasure to pain.

In his compelling account of the culture of commemoration that emerges after a large-scale tragedy such as 9/11, David Simpson addresses the implications of this incessant watching and re-watching of the attacks, by asking,

[w]hat happens when one watches someone's death as a narrative sequence? One has to decide whether to commit oneself to one's complicity as a spectator, as the person for whom this act is being performed, albeit as a repetition of what has already happened. The past cannot be changed, but it is as if it might be, because filmic time exactly repeats historical time.

(2006:105)

Once again touching on the idea of repetition, as Žižek does, Simpson highlights the other side of the *jouissance* Žižek identifies. Indeed, it almost seems as if DeLillo wrote this scene (described above) with Simpson's question in mind, for the reason Lianne feels that the image of the second plane gets under skin, in a similar manner to the "organic shrapnel" that DeLillo earlier describes (2008:16), is because she unconsciously believes that re-watching it makes her complicit in the act. In fact, DeLillo stresses this point a few passages later, in one of the novel's key moments, for it represents the only time Keith and Lianne watch a replay of the attacks together and, through that shared experience, they each recognise just how deeply the attacks have affected not only themselves, but their spouses as well. DeLillo ends the chapter (chapter seven) at that moment, in the same way he ends his short story, "Still-Life", with a conversation between Keith and Lianne that is worth reproducing here in full because of its centrality to DeLillo's narrative strategy.

[Keith] said, "it still looks like an accident, the first one. Even from this distance, way outside of the thing, how many days later, I'm standing here thinking it's an accident."

"Because it has to be."

"It has to be," he said.

"The way the camera sort of shows surprise."

"But only the first one."

"Only the first", she said.

"The second plane, by the time the second plane appears," he said, "we're all a little older and wiser."

(DeLillo, 2008:135)

With these words it seems that DeLillo is deciding the level of our complicity for us, because the wisdom to which Keith refers is nothing more than an innate disenchantment that serves to contextualise the complicity inherent within one's spectatorship, specifically in relation to the second plane – the repetition of the attack that was an attack itself. Or to phrase it differently, it was the act of repetition itself that proved that the first plane crash was not an accident. Therefore, choosing

to continue to watch the attacks, whether live or in replay (or perhaps even to read a novel like *Falling Man* that takes the attacks as its central subject) once that knowledge had been acquired, signals the acceptance of one's own complicity, at least to a certain degree.

"Even in New York – I Long for New York"

Baudrillard extends this complicity to the WTC towers themselves, arguing that the collapse of the towers was an unforeseen consequence. Indeed, "the symbolic collapse of [the] whole system came about by an unpredictable complicity, as though the towers, by collapsing on their own, by committing suicide, had joined in to round the event. In a sense, the entire system, by its internal fragility, lent the initial action a helping hand" (2003:8). This internal fragility was then externalised in the mental and physical 'collapses' of many of New York's inhabitants who were directly affected by the attacks, just as it was for Keith, Lianne, and most, if not all of *Falling Man*'s other characters. Baudrillard's comparison of the towers' collapse to suicide also rings true for David Janiak's performances, for as Mars-Jones quite accurately points out "the [falling] man's story, as it finally emerges, is... a genuine case of repetition compulsion with a sacrificial aspect, a sort of suicide in instalments, since the safety harness was rudimentary and the jumps physically damaging" (2007, online) to such an extent that Janiak died a few years later from complications arising out of the injuries he sustained while jumping. Both the suicidal nature of Janiak's performances and Lianne's own sense of complicity that stemmed from her intimate witnessing of one those performances are two of the primary reasons why Lianne becomes obsessed with the *Falling Man*'s re-enactments.

DeLillo's inclusion of the *Falling Man* signals one of the novel's central themes that, itself, is reminiscent of the work of Debord and Žižek – the precedence of the visual in the generation of meaning. The first occasion that Lianne witnesses Janiak's performance is when she is waiting outside Central Station for her mother, and she notes how there "were people shouting up at him, outraged at the spectacle, the puppetry of human desperation, a body's fleeting last breath and what it held. It held the gaze of the world, she [Lianne] thought. There was the awful openness of

it, something we'd not seen, the single falling figure that trails the collective dread, body come down among us all" (2008:33). With this DeLillo is seemingly drawing quite directly on Junod's account of "The Falling Man" photograph and the public outcry against it, for Lianne experiences the sight of Janiak's performances as traumatic, in a similar manner as would a witness of one of the real-world jumpers. Junod details how that trauma resulted in

the jumpers – and their images – [being] relegated to the Internet underbelly... where it is impossible to look at them without attendant feelings of shame and guilt. In a nation of voyeurs, the desire to face the most disturbing aspects of our most disturbing day was somehow ascribed to voyeurism, as though the jumpers' experience, instead of being central to the horror, was tangential to it, a sideshow best forgotten.

(2009, online)

DeLillo's commentary on this was to create that 'sideshow' himself through David Janiak's performances, perhaps to question the indelibility that has been attached to stories emerging that day, and to highlight the fact that alternative narratives, narratives which may not fit into the media coverage or political spin, will always find ways to surface through photographs and works of literature. DeLillo's only allusion to the photograph itself comes toward the end of the novel, when Lianne has googled Janiak after reading his obituary in the local paper. She finds mention of the photograph among the speculation of why Janiak had conducted his performances, and she narrates how "[i]t hit her hard when she first saw it, the day after, in the newspaper. The man headlong, the towers behind him... Headlong freefall, she thought, and this picture burned a hole in her mind and heart, dear God, he was a falling angel and his beauty was horrific" (2008:221–222).

Baudrillard goes on to speculate about how differently 9/11 would have been framed if the towers had not collapsed, or, indeed, if only one had collapsed, arguing that "the fragility of global power would not have been so strikingly proven. The towers, which were the emblem of that financial power and global economic liberalism, still embody it in their dramatic end" (2003:43), just as Janiak embodies the subverted narrative of that day. While the representation of the WTC as a symbol of the imperial, capitalist power of New York and the United States may be accurate on one level, Kaplan argues that "for those nearby, [the towers] functioned phenomenologically as part of people's spatial universe, in and of themselves, not especially representing American capitalism or American might. The discourse of

the United States and ‘the desert of the real’ are orthogonal to the experience of those of us close to the attacks. Both levels need taking into account” (2005:15–16). DeLillo’s concerns in *Falling Man* are similarly phenomenological in nature, for this novel provides us with personalised and individualised accounts of the attacks, in which the imaginary space left by the towers has been filled by the fear, doubt, anxiety and anger of the characters in the novel.

This individualised sense of trauma is particularly resonant in the transition from Hammad to Keith that occurs in the novel’s final pages. Keniston and Quinn argue that

[b]y leaving his representation of the attack itself until the end of the book, DeLillo suggests that we cannot understand the events of 9/11 except retrospectively and that memories are fragile and need constantly to be reiterated in order to be made meaningful. The novel leads us inexorably... to the chaos of the morning of September 11, and it leaves us there, recognizing the profound uncertainty precipitated by the attacks, as it connects survivors and terrorists, the past and the present.

(2008:5)

It is through his delicately crafted description of the attack that DeLillo reaffirms his right to take on the tragedy and trauma of that day and to mould it into his narrative. Indeed, in a manner similar to my retrospective reading of Rushie’s *Fury*, the final pages of *Falling Man* add insight to a narrative that has been told time and again, for they reposition the experience of the attacks as one that connects all of the people who died that day, whether in the planes or the towers, whether innocent victim or terrorist, through the materiality and the ‘realness’ that was offered by the World Trade Centre buildings. One of Žižek’s primary arguments in *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* centres on a question he poses: “[i]s not the goal of today’s fundamental terrorism to awaken us, western citizens... from our immersion in our everyday ideological numbness” (2002:9). It is this sense of awakening that DeLillo ultimately achieves through his narrative, for the shift from Hammad in the first plane, through the impact of that plane on the north tower, to Keith in that tower, occurs in a single sentence and essentially awakens Keith, and us as the reader, to the flood of images and impulses he later experiences as a result of the trauma of that awakening. In that moment, Keith’s past, present and future become inextricably linked with the World Trade Centre, and all that it represents in his life and in the lives of those who died, as well as those who lived. All his attempts to

work-through and act-out result from the weight of these memories, or, more specifically, the memory of himself in the tower as it began to collapse inwards around him. This is why he cannot face remaining in New York after the attacks, choosing, rather, to keep moving from city to city, and finally settling in perhaps the most transient of all cities, Las Vegas.

University Of Cape Town

Conclusion

- Beyond the Inferno -

Marco [Polo] enters a city; he sees someone in a square living a life or an instant that could be his... if he had stopped in time, long ago; or if, long ago, at a crossroads, instead of taking one road he had taken the opposite one... By now, from that real or hypothetical past of his, he is excluded; he cannot stop; he must go on to another city, where another of his pasts awaits him, or something that perhaps had been a possible future of his and is now someone else's present. Futures not achieved are only branches of the past; dead branches.

(Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, 1974)

The city as we might imagine it, the soft city of illusion, myth, aspiration, nightmare, is as real, maybe more, than the hard city one can locate in maps and statistics, in monographs on urban sociology and demography and architecture.

(Jonathan Raban, *Soft City*, 1974)

In his essay "The metropolis and mental life", Georg Simmel argues that "volatility is present in the city only because of the people themselves, or rather, because of the constant need of each person within that city to assert their own individuality and subjectivity with the aim of differentiating themselves from one another" (1950:410). Using this premise as a starting point, I decided to examine how this need played out within, arguably, one of the world's greatest cities, New York, and, more specifically, how it changed when that volatility was suddenly directed at the city from an external source: the terrorists behind the attacks on the World Trade Centre. This 'before' and 'after' dialectic was established as a result of the trauma induced in both the physical and emotional landscape of the city, for, as M. Christine Boyer argues, "the overwhelming trauma produced by the wound in the skyline and on the ground forces an exploration of two sets of graphic images and their related stories – those of the skyline of Manhattan and those of the collapsed World Trade Center. One narrates the glory of skyscrapers, while the other recounts the trauma of their demise" (2002:110).

Don DeLillo writes in his essay, "In the ruins of the future", that on 11 September 2001,

the world narrative belongs to terrorists. But the primary target of the men who attacked the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre was not the global economy. It was America that drew their fury. It was the high gloss of our modernity. It was the

thrust of our technology. It was our perceived godlessness. It was the blunt force of our foreign policy. It was the power of American culture to penetrate every wall, home, life and mind.

(2001, online)

Baudrillard, among many others, echoes this sentiment, when he argues that “the architectural object was destroyed [in the attacks], but it was the symbolic object which was targeted and which it was intended to demolish” (2003:44). The significance of Salman Rushdie’s *Fury* lies in how effectively this novel portrays the antagonism and violence that was the source of this symbolism for the terrorists. For Rushdie depicts a New York that has entered the twenty-first century at the height of its global economic success and cultural domination, but in which the consumerist, image-centric hyperreality of the postmodern era has infiltrated every aspect of urban life, intensifying the level of social antagonism inherent within it, hence the novel’s title. Thus, the four main characters within this novel who all struggle with this antagonism, each fulfil certain roles within the cityscape of New York, becoming archetypes of particular social groups or modes of behaviour that can be found within the contextualised real-world city.

With the destruction of the World Trade Centre, however, New York underwent another imagining in the eyes and minds of its inhabitants, and more specifically, through the intervention of the mass media, in the perceptions of the world at large, who watched the attacks with bated breath and followed their aftermath through the media for days and weeks afterwards. The context of New York within *Falling Man* is thus markedly different to Rushdie’s, for DeLillo’s focus shifts away from social antagonism and onto the trauma that was experienced as a result of the attacks. As such, DeLillo’s characters within *Falling Man* are generated out of the stories that emerged from the varied traumatic experiences of the attacks.

Both of these novels, therefore, function as heterotopias. For, like the various nicknames New York has acquired over the years, or the publicity campaigns, both positive and negative, that have attempted to reconceptualise its city space, these novels each present an imagining of New York to which we, as readers, can relate from our experiences of the city, whether first-hand, or through the media, while simultaneously contrasting what we believe to be real with what is imagined, and

thus highlighting the significance of history and memory in the formulation of one's identity within an urban environment.

While the context and conceptualisation of these novels differ, I believe their connectedness, and the significance of reading them in light of one another, is visible through the need for 'escape' that is manifested in all of the characters lives in both novels. This sense of wishing to escape "beyond the inferno" of the city, as premised in the conclusion to Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, points towards the deficiency that Jameson highlights as being present within postmodern urban life: the inability of the "individual human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surroundings perceptually... and cognitively" (1984:83). The 9/11 attacks simply reinforced this deficiency, by providing first-hand proof that the "enormity of human work", as Kasinitz phrases it (1995:85), was ultimately transitory. A retrospective reading of *Fury* thus shows Rushdie's perceptiveness in constructing a narrative that played into this deficiency, while presciently moving that narrative toward that moment in which the antagonism and fury would boil over into the reality of New York's city-space. DeLillo's aim in *Falling Man*, was to write about this aftermath, the sense of 'what's next?' that belies any escape from history and memory, and to acknowledge that "there is [now] something empty in the sky, [while trying] to give memory, tenderness and meaning to all that howling space" (2001, online).

References

- Abel, M. 2003. Don DeLillo's 'In the ruins of the future': literature, images, and the rhetoric of seeing 9/11. *PMLA*. 18(5):1236–1250. [Online]. Available from JSTOR at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1261462> [2010, January 18].
- Abrams, D. 2008. Author Salman Rushdie says no more autobiographical characters, cited in Finney, B. 2009. Furious simulation, or simulated fury: Salman Rushdie's *Fury* (2001). In *Rushdie the Novelist: from Grimus to The Enchantress of Florence*. M. Bharat, ed. New Dehli: Pencroft International. 278–279.
- Adiga, A. 2005. A fable of fury: in 'Shalimar the clown', set in Kashmir, Salman Rushdie rediscovers some of his raging brilliance. *Time International (Europe Edition)* 166(10):52. [Online]. Available from Academic OneFile: Gale at <http://find.galegroup.com/gtx/infomark.do?&contentSet=IAC-Documents&type=retrieve&tabID=T003&prodId=AONE&docId=A136473927&source=gale&srcprod=AONE&userGroupName=unict&version=1.0> [2009, April 16].
- Ahmed, D. 2009. "This fundo stuff is really something new": fundamentalism and hybridity in *The Moor's Last Sigh*. In *Rushdie the Novelist: from Grimus to The Enchantress of Florence*. M. Bharat, ed. New Dehli: Pencroft International. 224–246.
- Alighieri, D. 2008. *Inferno*. Transl., M. Palmer. G. Mazzotta, ed. New York: Norton.
- Amis, M. 2008. *The Second Plane: September 11: Terror and Boredom*. Toronto: Knopf Canada.
- Auster, P. 2004 [1985]. City of glass. In *The New York Trilogy*. London: Faber and Faber. 1–158.
- Badiou, A. 2007. *The Century*. Transl., A. Toscano. London: Polity Press.
- Baudrillard, J. 1994 [1983]. *Simulacra and Simulation*. Transl., S.F. Glaser. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- 1994 [1989]. *America*. Transl., C. Turner. London: Verso.
- 2003 [2002]. *The Spirit of Terrorism*. Transl., C. Turner. London: Verso.

- Beigbeder, F. 2005. [2003]. *Windows on the World: a Novel*. Transl., F. Wynne. New York: Hyperion.
- Bender, T. 2002. *The Unfinished City: New York and the Metropolitan Idea*. New York: The New Press.
- Benjamin, W. 1983. *Charles Baudelaire: a Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*. Transl., H. Zohn. London: Verso.
- Berger, J. 2000. Twentieth-century apocalypse: forecasts and aftermaths. *Twentieth Century Literature*. 46(4):387–395. [Online]. Available from JSTOR at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/827838> [2009, October 29].
- Brouillette, S. 2005. Authorship as crisis in Salman Rushdie's *Fury*. *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. 40(1):137–156. DOI: 10.1177/0021989405050669. [Online]. Available from Sage Publications at <http://jcl.sagepub.com> [2009, April 16].
- Boyer, M.C. 2002. Meditations of a wounded skyline and its stratigraphies of pain. In *After the World Trade Centre: Rethinking New York*. M. Sorkin and S. Zukin, eds. New York: Routledge. 109–120.
- Calvino, I. 1997 [1974]. *Invisible Cities*. Transl., W. Weaver. London: Vintage Books.
- Caruth, C. 1996. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Chomsky, N. 2002. 9–11. New York: Steven Stories Press.
- Debord, G. 1994. [1967]. *The Society of the Spectacle*. Transl., D. Nicholson-Smith. New York: Zone Books.
- De Certeau, M. 1988 [1984]. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Transl., S. Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- DeLillo, D. 1977. *Players*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- 1991. *Mao II*. New York: Scribner.
- 1997. *Underworld*. New York: Scribner.
- 2001. In the ruins of the future. *Guardian*, December 22. [Online]. Available: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2001/dec/22/fiction.don-delillo> [2009, November 30].

- 2007. Still-Life. *The New Yorker*, April 9. [Online]. Available: http://www.newyorker.com/fiction/features/2007/04/09/070409fi_fiction_delillo [2009, November 30].
- 2008 [2007]. *Falling Man*. London: Picador.
- Eber, R. 2001. 'Fury': Rushdie the pupper-master. *The New York Times*, September 9. [Online]. Available: <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/09/books/review/09EDERLTW.html> [2009, September 16].
- Editorial. 2001. The war against America; an unfathomable attack. *The New York Times*, September 12. [Online]. Available: <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/12/opinion/the-war-against-america-an-unfathomable-attack.html?scp=1&sq=one+of+those+moments+when+history+splits&st=nyt> [2010, March 10].
- Ellison, R. 1981 [1952]. *Invisible Man*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Finney, B. 2009. Furious simulation, or simulated fury: Salman Rushdie's *Fury* (2001). In *Rushdie the Novelist: from Grimus to The Enchantress of Florence*. M. Bharat, ed. New Dehli: Pencroft International. 278–292.
- Fitzgerald, F.S. 1991 [1925]. *The Great Gatsby*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Foer, J.S. 2005. *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*. Wilmington: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Foucault, M. 1986. Of other spaces. *Diacritics* 16(1):22–27. Transl., J. Miskowiec. [Online]. Available from JSTOR at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/464648> [2009, June 1].
- Freud, S. 1966. [1895]. Project for a scientific psychology. Transl., J. Strachey. In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. I*. A. Freud, A. Strachey and A. Tyson, eds. London: Hogarth Press. 283–398.
- 1966 [1914]. Remembering, repeating and working-through. Transl., J. Strachey. In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XII*. A. Freud, A. Strachey and A. Tyson, eds. London: Hogarth Press. 145–156.

- 1966 [1919]. The uncanny. Transl., J. Strachey. In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XVII*. A. Freud, A. Strachey and A. Tyson, eds. London: Hogarth Press. 217–252.
- 1922. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Transl., C.J.M Hubback. New York: Boni and Liveright.
- 1930. *Civilization and its Discontents*. Transl., J Riviere. London: Hogarth Press.
- Frisby, D. 1994. The flâneur in social theory. In *The Flâneur*. K. Tester, ed. London: Routledge. 81–110.
- Genocchio, B. 1995. Discourse, discontinuity, difference: the question of ‘other’ spaces. In *Postmodern Cities and Spaces*. S. Watson and K. Gibson, eds. Cambridge: Blackwell. 35–47.
- Gonzalez, M. 2005. *Fiction After the Fatwa: Salman Rushdie and the Charm of Catastrophe*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Green, D. 2003. Postmodern American fiction. *The Antioch Review* 61(4):729–741. [Online]. Available from JSTOR at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4614569> [2010, January 18].
- Greenburg, M. 2008. *Branding New York: How a City in Crisis was Sold to the World*. New York: Routledge.
- Hall, T., Hubbard, P. & Short, J. R. 2008. Introduction. In *The Sage Companion to the City*. T. Hall, P. Hubbard and J.R. Short, eds. London: Sage. 1–10.
- Heidegger, M. 1971. Building, dwelling, thinking. In *Rethinking Architecture: a Reader in Cultural Theory*. N. Leach, ed. 1997. London: Routledge. 100–109.
- Jameson, J. 1984. Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism. *New Left Review* 146:53–92. [Online]. Available: <http://www.newleftreview.org/?getpdf=NLR14203&pdflang=en> [2009, June 1].
- Junod, T. 2007. The man who invented 9/11. *Esquire*, May 7. [Online] Available: <http://www.esquire.com/fiction/book-review/delillo> [2010, February 24].
- 2009 [2003]. The falling man. *Esquire*, September 9. [Online]. Available: http://www.esquire.com/features/ESQ0903-SEP_FALLINGMAN [2010, February 24].

- Kakutani, M. 2007. A man, a woman and a day of terror. *The New York Times*, May 9. [Online]. Available: http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/09/books/09kaku.html?_r=1 [2009, November 30].
- Kaplan, E.A. 2005. *Trauma Culture: the Politics of terror and Loss in Media and Literature*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Kasinitz, P. 1995. Introduction to part II. In *Metropolis: Centre and Symbol of our Times*. P. Kasinitz, ed. London: MacMillan. 85–97.
- Keniston, A. & Quinn, J.F. 2008. Representing 9/11: literature and resistance. In *Literature After 9/11*. A. Keniston and J.F. Quinn, eds. New York: Routledge. 1–15.
- Kermode, F. 1967. *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- King, G., ed. 2005. *The Spectacle of the Real*. Bristol: Intellect Books.
- LaCapra, D. 1994. *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- 1998. *History and Memory after Auschwitz*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- 2001. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- LaCapra, D. & Goldberg, A. 1998. “Acting-out” and “Working-through” Trauma: an Interview with Professor Dominic LaCapra. Jerusalem: Cornell University. [Online]. Available http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoftword-3648.pdf [2009, June 22].
- Lefebvre, H. 1991 [1974]. *The Production of Space*. Transl., D. Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Malik, K. 2009. *From Fatwa to Jihad: the Rushdie Affair and its Legacy*. London: Atlantic Books.
- Mars-Jones, A. 2007. As his world came tumbling down. *The Observer*, May 13. [Online]. Available: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2007/may/13/fiction.dondelillo> [2009, November 30].
- Marx, K. & Engels, F. The city, the division of labor, and the emergence of modern capitalism. In *Modernization, Urbanization and the Urban Crisis*. G. Germani, ed. 1973. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 138–148.

- McHale, B. 1987. *Postmodernist Fiction*. New York: Methuen.
- McInerney, J. 2006. *The Good Life*. New York: Alfred. A. Knopf.
- Mumford, L. 1995 [1938]. The culture of cities. In *Metropolis: Centre and Symbol of our Times*. P. Kasinitz, ed. London: MacMillan. 21–29.
- Nabakov, V. 1959. *Lolita*. London: Weidenfield & Nicolson.
- Page, M. 2005. The city's end: past and present narratives of New York's destruction. In *The Resilient City: How Modern Cities Recover from Disaster*. L.J. Vale and T.J. Campanella, eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 75–93.
- Park, R.E. 1967 [1925]. The city: suggestions for the investigation of human behavior in the urban environment. In *The City*. R.E Park and E.W. Burgess, eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1–46.
- Raban, J. 1974. *Soft City*. New York: The Harvill Press.
- Reitano, J. 2006. *The Restless City: a Short History of New York from Colonial Times to the Present*. New York: Routledge.
- Rose, C. 1996. The Moor's Last Sigh. In *Conversations with Rushdie*. M. Reder, ed. 2000. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi. 199–216.
- Rothberg, M. 2008. Seeing terror, feeling art: public and private in post-9/11 literature. In *Literature After 9/11*. A. Keniston and J.F Quinn, eds. New York: Routledge. 123–142.
- Rushdie, S. 1981. *Midnight's Children*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- 2000 [1987]. *The Jaguar Smile: a Nicaraguan Journey*. London: Vintage.
- 1988. *The Satanic Verses*. New York: Viking Press.
- 1999. *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*. New York: Henry Holt & Company.
- 2002 [2001]. *Fury*. London: Vintage.
- 2003. *Step Across this Line: Collected Non-Fiction 1992–2002*. London: Vintage.
- Simmel, G. 2006 [1900]. *The Philosophy of Money*. Transl. T. Bottommore and D, Frisby. London: Routledge.
- 1950 [1903] The metropolis and mental life. In *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. K.H. Wolff, ed. Transl. K.H. Wolff. New York: The Free Press. 409–424.
- Bridge and door. In *Rethinking Architecture: a Reader in Cultural Theory*. N. Leach, ed. 1997. London: Routledge. 66–69.

- Simpson, D. 2006. *9/11: the Culture of Commemoration*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Smith, K. 2005. Reframing fantasy: September 11 and the global audience. In *The Spectacle of the Real*. G. King, ed. Bristol: Intellect Books. 59–70.
- Southall, A. 1998. *The City in Time and Space*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.
- Spiegelman, A. 2004. *In the Shadow of No Towers*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Stephanson, A. & Jameson, F. 1989. Regarding postmodernism: a conversation with Fredric Jameson. *Social Text* 21:3–30. [Online]. Available from JSTOR at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/827806> [2009, June 1].
- Stevenson, S. 2003. *Cities and Urban Cultures*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Tapia, A.H. 2003. Technomillennialism: a subcultural response to the threat of Y2K. *Science, Technology & Human Values* 28(4):483–512. [Online]. Available from JSTOR at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1557997> [2009, October 29].
- Thurschwell, A. Writing terror: Don DeLillo on the task of literature after 9/11. *Law and Literature* 19(2):277–302. [Online]. Available from Literature Online at http://lion.chadwyck.co.uk/searchFulltext.do?id=R03943796&divLevel=0&trailId=124AAD1EFE1&area=abell&forward=critref_ft [2009, November 30].
- Tonkiss, F. 2005. *Space, the City and Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Uptake, J. 2006. *Terrorist*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Virilio, P. 2002. *Ground Zero*. London: Verso.
- Weinstein, D. & Weinstein, M.A. 1993. *Postmodern(ized) Simmel*. London: Routledge.
- Whitehead, C. 2001. The way we live now: 11–11–01; Lost and found. *The New York Times Magazine*, November 11. [Online] Available: <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/11/magazine/the-way-we-live-now-11-11-01-lost-and-found.html?pagewanted=1> [2010, February 24].
- Wood, J. 2001. The nobu novel. *The New Republic*, September 24. [Online]. Available: <http://www.tnr.com/print/article/books-and-arts/nobu-novel> [2009, October 13].

----- 2007. Black noise. *The New Republic*, July 2. [Online]. Available: <http://www.tnr.com/print/article/books-and-arts/black-noise> [2009, November 30].

Žižek, S. 2002. *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*. London: Verso.

University Of Cape Town